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ILLUSTRATED ENGLISH SOCIAL HISTORY I

G M TREVELYAN

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G M TREVELYAN

VOLUME ONE CHAUCER'S ENGLAND AND THE EARLY TUDORS

WITH 180 ILLUSTRATIONS SELECTED BY RUTH C WRIGHT

PENGUIN BOOKS



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TO THE MEMORY OF EILEEN POWER

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PREFATORY NOTE
TO THE ILLUSTRATIONS

In sel

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th as far as might be from English sources as distinct from European sources generally, and secondly, that they should be as nearly contemporary as possible with the scenes they represent It has not been possible to adhere strictly to these two principles in every example; for instance, I have had to turn to French chronicles (with Flemish illumination) for such illustrations as those of the Peasants' Revolt [11–13],[1] where the chronicler's miniaturist is endeavouring to portray the actual historical events of some eighty years before, again I have used Fle

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from English sources

these illustrations, while affording useful parallels at a time when the practices of chivalry, the minutiae of everyday life and entertainment, or the methods

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of Fec 's 1785 water colour copy

1 Figures in square brackets refer to illustrations in the text

of the Cowdray picture of Edward VI s Riding from the Tower in 1547 [130], which was destroyed in the disastrous Cowdray fire of 1793

Modern photographs and eighteenth- and nineteenth century engravings have been used freely to illustrate places (as distinct from social scenes), even though the purist might I suppose, complain that I have used Loggan's engravings of Trinity or Christ Church to show in full maturity the foundations of Henry VIII and Wolsey, instead of confining myself to plans of the stage which they had actually reached in Tudor times

I cannot hope to reflect in entirety the many sided picture presented by Dr Trevelyan but I have endeavoured to cover as representative a selection as possible of all the places and activities mentioned

Detailed descriptive notes on the illustrations will be found at the end of the book, these give a summary account of the source of each illustration its authorship date and provenance and its present whereabouts together with an indication of any particular noteworthy features either in its subject matter or manner of treatment

RUTH C WRIGHT

INTRODUCTION TO COMPLETE EDITION

of England from the Roman times to our own, but I left to the last the part that I would find most difficult, the centuries preceding the fourteenth The war has rendered it impossible for me to complete the work, but it has occurred to me that the chapters which I have already finished constitute a consecutive story of six centuries, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth and as such some readers may give it welcome

Social history might be defined negatively as the history of

a reversal of that method may have its uses to redress the balance During my own lifetime a third very flourishing sort of history has come into existence the economic, which greatly assists the serious study of social history For the social scene grows out of economic conditions to much the same extent

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RUTH C WRIGHT

INTRODUCTION TO COMPLETE EDITION

Although I have attempted to bring this book up to date in the light of the most recent publications (1941), it was nearly all written before the war. I then had in view a social history of England from the Roman times to our own, but I left to the last the part that I would find most difficult, the centuries preceding the fourteenth. The war has rendered it impossible for me to complete the work, but it has occurred to me that the chapters which I have already finished constitute a consecutive story of six centuries from the fourteenth to the nineteenth, and as such some readers may give it welcome.

Social history might be defined negatively as the history of a people with the politics left out. It is perhaps difficult to leave out the politics from the history of any people, particularly the English people. But as so many history books have consisted of political annals with little reference to their social environment, a reversal of that method may have its uses to redress the balance. During my own lifetime a third very flourishing sort of history has come into existence, the economic, which greatly assists the serious study of social history. For the social scene grows out of economic conditions, to much the same extent that political events in their turn grow out of social conditions. Without social history, economic history is barren and political history is unintelligible.

But social history does not merely provide the required link between economic and political history. It has also its own positive value and peculiar concern. Its scope may be defined as the

daily life of the inhabitants of the land in past ages this includes the human as well as the economic relation of different classes to one another, the character of family and household life, the conditions of labour and of leisure, the attitude of man to nature, the culture of each age as it arose out of these general conditions of life, and took ever-changing forms in religion, literature and music, architecture, learning and thought

How far can we know the real life of men in each successive age of the past? Historians and antiquarians have amassed by patient scholarship a great sum of information, and have edited innumerable records, letters, and journals, enough to provide reading for whole lifetimes, yet even this mass of knowledge is small indeed compared to the sum total of social history, which could only be mastered if we knew the biographies of all the millions of men, women and children who have lived in England The generalizations which are the stock-in trade of the social historian, must necessarily be based on a small number of particular instances, which are assumed to be typical, but which cannot be the whole of the complicated truth

And small as is the mass of accumulated knowledge in proportion to the vastness of the theme how pitifully small is the selection from that mass which I have been able to set down in 200,000 words dealing with six whole centuries of the variegated and wonderful life of England Yet even a millionth part of a loaf may be better than no bread It may at least whet the appetite If it makes a few people more eager to study the literature and records of the past this book will have served its turn

Disinterested intellectual curiosity is the life blood of real civilization Social history provides one of its best forms At bottom, I think, the appeal of history is imaginative Our imagination craves to behold our ancestors as they really were, going about their daily business and daily pleasure Carlyle called the antiquarian or historical researcher Dryasdust Dryasdust at bottom is a poet He may find difficulty in expressing to his neighbour the poetry he finds for himself in the muniment room But the main impulse of his life is the desire to feel the reality of life in the past, to be familiar with

the chronicle of wasted time' for the sake of 'ladies dead and lovely knights'

Scott began life as Dryasdust – as an antiquarian – because that way he could find most poetry, most romance Carlyle,

unearth was more poetical than all *Shelley* and more romantic than all Scott

Consider all that lies in that one word *Past*! What a pathetic, sacred in every sense *poetic*, meaning is implied in it, a meaning growing ever the clearer the farther we recede in time – the more of that same Past we have to look through! History after all is the true poetry And Reality, if rightly interpreted, is grander than Fiction

It is the detailed study of history that makes us feel that the past was as real as the present The world supposes that we historians are absorbed in the dusty records of the dead, that we can see nothing save –

> The lost-to-light ghosts, grey-mailed
> As you see the grey river mist
> Hold shapes on the yonder bank

But to us, as we read, they take form, colour, gesture, passion, thought It is only by study that we can see our forerunners, remote and recent, in their habits as they lived intent each on

elation, there is the ploughman behind the oxen, or the horses, or the machine, and his wife busy all day in the cottage, waiting for him with her daily accumulated budget of evening news

Each one gentle and simple, in his commonest goings and comings, was ruled by a complicated and ever-shifting fabric of custom and law, society and politics, events at home and abroad, some of them little known by him and less understood

not like the Black Death a fortuitous obstruction fallen across the ri er of life and temporarily diverting it it is the ... life itself in the ...

at ...

sev ... u erent kinds of social and economic organization ... every period going on simultaneously in the same country the same shire the same town Thus in the realm of agriculture we find the open field strip cultivation of the Anglo Saxons still extant in the eighteenth century side by side with ancient enclosed fields of the far older Celtic pattern and modern enclosures scientifically cultivated by methods approved b ... Young And so it ... mercial organizat ... systems are foun ... ... centuries In every thing the old overlaps the new in religion in thought in family custom There is never any clear cut there is no single moment when all Englishmen adopt new ways of life and thought.

These things being so it has seemed to me best to tell the story as life is presented on the stage that is to say by a series of scenes divided by intervals of time There will be a good deal in common between one scene and the next between the age of Chaucer and the age of Caxton, the age of Dr Johnson and the age of Cobbett but there will also be a good deal that is different

To obtain a true picture of any period both the old and the new elements must be borne in mind. Sometimes in forming a mental picture of a period in the past people seize hold of the new features and forget the overlap of the old For example students of history are often so much obsessed by the notorious political event of the Peterloo massacre that they imagine the Lancashire factory hand as the typical wage earner of the year 1819 but he was not he was only a local type the newest type the type of the future The trouble was that the rest of old fashioned society of the Regency period had not yet adjusted itself to the change heralded by his advent They were annoyed with him they could not place him because he was not then as he is now the normal

So then the method of this book is to present a series of successive scenes of English life and the first of these scenes presented is the lifetime of Chaucer (1340–1400) I have already confessed that the reason why the book begins at that point is *personal and accidental But in fact it is a good starting point* For in Chaucer s time the English people first clearly appear as a racial and cultural unit The component races and languages have been melted into one The upper class is no longer French nor the peasant class Anglo Saxon all are English England has ceased to be mainly a recipient of influences from without Henceforward she gives forth her own In the age of Chaucer Wyclif Wat Tyler and the English bowmen she is beginning to create her own island forms in literature religion economic society and war *The forces moulding England are no longer* foreign but native She no longer owes her progress to great foreign churchmen and administrators to Norman ideas of the feudal manor to Angevin lawyer kings to cavalry armed and trained on French models to the friars coming over from Latin lands Henceforward England creates her own types and her own customs

When in the Hundred Years War (1337 1453) the God dams (as Joan of Arc called them) set out to conquer France *they went there as foreign invaders and their successes were* due to the fact that England was already organized as a nation and conscious of her nationhood while France as yet was not And when that attempted conquest at length failed England was left as a strange island anchored off the Continent no longer a mere offshoot or extension of the European world

It is true that there was nothing sudden in this growth of our distinctive nationhood The process neither began nor ended in the lifetime of Chaucer But during those years the principle is *more active and more observable than in the three previous* centuries when the Christian and feudal civilization of Europe including England was not national but cosmopolitan In the England of Chaucer s time we have a nation

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CHAPTER ONE 1340 1400

CHAUCER S ENGLAND

FIELD VILLAGE AND MANOR HOUSE

In Chaucer s England we see for the first time the modern mingling with the medieval and England herself beginning to emerge as a distinct nation no longer a mere oversea extension of Franco-Latin Europe The poet s own works register the greatest modern fact of all the birth and general acceptance of our language the Saxon and French words happily blended at last into English tongue which all understanden and which is therefore coming into use as the vehicle of school teaching and of legal proceedings There were indeed various provincial dialects of English besides the totally distinct Welsh and Cornish And some classes of society had a second language the more learned of the clergy had Latin and the courtiers and well born had French no longer indeed their childhood s tongue but a foreign speech to be learnt

after the school of Stratford atte Bowe [1]

Chaucer who spent long hours of his busy day in Court circles had the culture of medieval France at his fingers ends

1 Some can French and no Lat n
That have used courts and dwelled therein
And some can of Latin a party
That can French full febelly
And some understandeth English
That ne ther can Latin nor French
But lerid and lewid [learned and ignorant] old and young
All understanden English tongue

So in Chaucer s day wrote W ll am Nassyngton

when therefore he set the pattern of modern English poetry for centuries to come, he set it in *forms* and metres derived *from* France and Italy, in both of which countries he had travelled several times on business of State None the less he struck a ... *es*, gave ... *r*', one ... ot look for in Dante, Petrarch, or the *Roman de la Rose*, and do not find even in Boccaccio or Froissart

Other characteristics of the new born nation were expressed in Langland s religious allegory, *Piers Plowman* Though he too was a learned poet and a Londoner most of his life, he was by origin a Malvern man, and used the form still common in the West country, the alliterative blank verse derived from Anglo Saxon poetry That native English form was soon to be generally displaced by Chaucer s rhymings, but the spirit of *Piers Plowman* lived on in the religious earnestness of our fathers, their continual indignation at the wrongdoing of others and their occasional sorrow for their own English Puritanism is much older than the Reformation, and the two dreamers', Piers the Plowman and Bunyan the tinker, are more alike in imagination and in feeling than any other two writers divided by three centuries

While Langland and Gower, without straying into heresy, bewailed the corruptions of medieval society and religion, looking back to the ideals of the past rather than forward to a different future, Wyclif hammered out red-hot a programme of change, most of which was long afterwards put into force by English anti clericalism and English Protestantism An open Bible in the new common tongue of England was part of this programme Meanwhile John Ball asked in medieval terms the most modern question of all

When Adam delved and Evé span
Who was then a gentleman?

For in the economic sphere also the medieval was beginning to yield to the modern, and England was beginning to develop social classes peculiar to herself The break up of the feudal manor and the commutation of field serfdom were proceeding

apace The demand advanced by the rebellious peasants that all [illegible] today, but

[illegible]

dom, were constantly on strike for higher pay in approved modern English fashion Moreover, the employers against whom these strikes were directed were not so much the old feudal lords as new middle classes of leasehold farmers manufacturers and merchants. The cloth trade, destined to make the wealth and remould the society of England, was already in the reign of Edward III fast encroaching on the medieval marketing of our raw wool overseas And the State was already making intermittent attempts to unite the interests of the mutually jealous medieval towns in a common policy of protection and control for the trade of the nation

In pursuit of this policy sea power must be maintained in home waters and Edward III s new gold coinage represents him standing armed and crowned in a ship [1] Chaucer s merchant

> Wold the see were kept for anything
> Betwixt Middleburgh and Orewell



1 Edward III s new gold coinage

(namely, between Holland and Suffolk) National self-consciousness is beginning to dissolve the local loyalties and the rigid class divisions which had characterized the cosmopolitan society of the feudal age And so, in the Hundred Years War to plunder France, the King and nobles find themselves supported by a new force, a democratic jingoism of the modern type, taking the place of feudal polity and warfare At Crecy and Agincourt, that 'stout yeoman , the archer, is in the forefront of his country s battle, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the dismounted knights and nobles of England and shooting down, in heaps of men and horses, the antiquated chivalry of France [2]

The institution of justices of the peace local gentry appointed by the Crown to govern the neighbourhood in the King s name, was a move away from inherited feudal jurisdictions But it was also a reversal of the movement towards bureaucratic royal centralization it recognized and used local connexions and influence for the King s purposes, a compromise significant of the future development of English society as distinct from that of other lands

All these movements – economic, social, ecclesiastical, national – are reflected in the proceedings of Parliament, a characteristically medieval institution in origin, but already on the way to be modernized It is not merely a council of great nobles, churchmen judges and civil servants, brought together to advise or harass the King The Commons are already acquiring a limited importance of their own In high politics it may be that the members of the Lower House are only pawns in the game of rival parties at Court, but on their own account they voice the economic policy of the new middle classes in town and village often selfish enough they express the nation's anger at the misconduct of the war by land and sea and the perpetual demand for better order and stronger justice at home, not to be had till Tudor times

Thus the age of Chaucer speaks to us with many voices not unintelligible to the modern ear Indeed we may be tempted to think that we understanden more than in fact we do For these ancestors of ours, in one half of their thoughts and acts, were still guided by a complex of intellectual, ethical, and

social assumpt ons of which onlv medieval scholars can today comprehend the true purport

The most mportant of the changes proceeding during tl e lifetime of Chaucer (1340–1400) was the break up of the feudal manor Farm leases and money wages were increasingly taking the place of cultivation of the lord s demesne l y servile lab ur so beginning the gradual transformation of the I nglisl village

2 The archer n the forefront of h s country s battle



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from a community of semi bondsmen to an individualist society in which all were at least legally free and in which the cash nexus had replaced customary rights This great change broke the mould of the static feudal world and liberated mobile forces of capital labour and personal enterprise which in the course of time made a richer and more varied life in town and village and opened out new possibilities to trade and manu facture as well as to agriculture

In order to understand the meaning of this change it is necessary to give a brief account of the older system that was gradually displaced

The most characteristic though by no means the only method of cultivation in medieval England was the open field [1] It was established throughout the Midlands from the Isle of Wight to the Yorkshire Wolds It implied a village community working huge unenclosed fields on a principle of strip allotments Each farmer had a certain number of arable strips of half an acre or one acre each His long narrow strips did not lie next to one another in a compact farm which would have involved the expense of hedging they were scattered over the open field between those of his neighbours

The outline of many of these strips ploughed by the farmers of Saxon medieval and Tudor Stuart times can still clearly be seen. The ridge and furrow of pasture fields that [illegible] of the English

made by the turn of the plough in order to carry off the water [2] Often though not always the curved ridge or land thus clearly visible today represents a strip that was held and worked long ago by a peasant farmer who also held and

1 See C S Orwin *The Open Fields* (1938) for the best account of the system

2 The first sentences of Dorothy Wordsworth s *Journal* written *after a night of rain* illustrate the nature and appearance of th s system of surface drainage once almost universal in English ploughlands

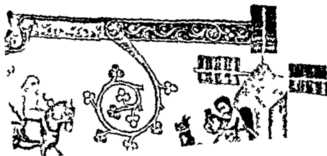
Alfoxden 20 Jan 1798 The green paths down the hillsides are channels for streams *The young wheat is streaked by silver lines of water running between the ridges*

This system of servile tenure with the fixed workdays of service on the lord s demesne held good all over England not only in the regions of open field strip cultivation but in the south-east the west and the north, lands of old enclosure where other systems of cultivation were ...

... a society constituted by the ... of the manor or his agents on the one side and by his peasant serfs on the other The freeman were few and far



6 Tak ng corn to be ground at the lord s mill



worked many other strips in other parts of the open field The strips were not, in most cases, divided from one another by grass balks, but only by the open drain made by the plough [3, 4]

The strips or 'lands' were not severally enclosed The whole vast 'open field was surrounded, when necessary, not by permanent hedges but by movable hurdles There might be two, three, or more of these great arable fields belonging to the village and subdivided among the farmers, one of the fields lay fallow while the others were under crop

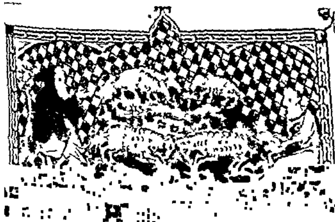
The meadowlands for hay were cultivated on a similar principle Both meadowland and arable, after hay and corn had been cut, were thrown open for common pasture, the grazing *rights being ascribed to each man by stints and regulations* settled by the village community as a whole, to do justice to each of its members

This system of cultivation, originated by the first Anglo Saxon settlers, lasted down to the time of the modern enclosures It was economically sound as long as the object of each farmer was to raise food for his family rather than for the market It combined the advantages of individual labour and public control, it saved the expense of fencing, it gave each farmer a fair share in the better and worse land, it bound the villagers together as a community and gave to the humblest his own land and his voice in the agricultural policy to be followed for the year by the whole village

On this democracy of peasant cultivators was heavily superimposed the feudal power and legal rights of the lord of the manor The peasant cultivators, in relation to each other were a self governing community, but in relation to the lord *of the manor they were serfs They had not the legal right to* leave their holdings they were *ascripti glebae*, bound to the soil' They must grind their corn at the lord s mill [6] They could not give their children in marriage without his consent Above all they owed him field service on certain days of the year, when they must labour not on their own land but on his, under the orders of his bailiff [5] In some villages many of the strips in the great field belonged to the lord, but he also had in most cases a compact demesne land of his own

off from labour on their own strips only on such workdays as the custom of the manor assigned to the lord In some cases the villeins themselves actually preferred the old system of personal service

The commutation of field services had thus made some headway before the twelfth century closed But in the following century the process was very frequently reversed Workdays for which money payments had been substituted in the age of Becket were being again demanded in the age of Simon de Montfort and in some cases new burdens were imposed A



7 The shepherd s l fe

8 Peasants keep sheep



between, fewer than they had been in Anglo-Saxon times, particularly in the Danelaw

But, for a true picture of medieval agriculture in England, we must never forget sheep-farming and the shepherd s life Our island produced the best wool in Europe, and had for centuries supplied the Flemish and Italian looms with material with which they could not dispense for luxury production, and which they could get nowhere else The woolsack, the symbolic seat of England's Chancellor, was the true wealth of the King and of his subjects, rich and poor, cleric and lay, supplying them with coin over and above the food they wrung from the soil and themselves consumed Not only the distinctively pastoral regions, the great Yorkshire dales and the Cotswold hills and Sussex downs and the green oozy islands of the fens, but ordinary arable farms had sheep in abundance Not only the great sheep farming barons, bishops, and abbots – with their flocks counted by thousands and tens of thousands, tended by professional shepherds – but the peasants of ordinary manors themselves dealt in wool, and often together owned more sheep than were fed on the lord s demesne Indeed the proportion of English sheep reared by the peasants was increasing in the reign of Edward III as against the number reared by lay and ecclesiastical landlords [7, 8] [1]

The lifetime of Chaucer roughly corresponds with the years when the disruption of the old manorial system was in most rapid and painful progress But the change was not complete till long after his death and it had begun long before his birth As early as the twelfth century the lords of a number of manors had adopted a custom of commuting for money rents, the forced services due on their demesne lands The serfs did not thereby become freemen in the eye of the law, they were still subject to other servile dues, and even their liability to work for certain days on their lord s land might be revived if he chose to renew his claim Meanwhile it stood commuted from year to year For experience had taught the bailiff that the demesne was better cultivated by hired men working all the year round, than by the grudging service of farmers called

1 See Eileen Power, *Medieval English Wool Trade*, 1941, chap 11

labourers who had no land were able, in the general scarcity of hands, to demand much higher wages than before, whether from the bailiff of the demesne or from the farmers of the open field

Some lords still relied on the compulsory labour of the serfs to cultivate the home farm, but the decreased numbers and the increasing recalcitrance of the villagers from whom such services were due clogged the wheels of the old system Often, when the bailiff pressed a villein to perform his field work, he 'fled' to better himself on the other side of the forest, where every town and every village was so short of labour after the Black Death that high wages were given to immigrants, and no questions asked as to whence they came A serf, 'bound to the soil of a manor by law, might detach himself in physical reality, unless indeed he was encumbered by a wife and children whose migration was more difficult Such 'flights' of single villeins, usually the [illegible]

except for a low money rent

More and more, therefore, as Chaucer was growing to manhood, the lords abandoned the attempt to cultivate their demesne lands by the old method, and consented to commute field services for cash Since there was more coin per head of the reduced population, it was easier for the serf to save or borrow enough shillings to buy his freedom and to pay money rent for his farm And many of the peasants kept sheep, by the sale of whose wool they obtained coin to buy their freedom

With the money received in lieu of field service, the lords could offer wages to free labourers But they could seldom offer enough because the price of labour was now so high Many landlords therefore ceased to cultivate the demesne themselves, and let it on lease to a new class of yeoman farmer These farmers often took over the lord's cattle on a stock and-land lease Sometimes they paid money rents, but often it was agreed that they should pay in kind, supplying the household of the manor with its food and drink The lord's family had always been fed from the produce of the home farm and, now that it was let, the old kindly connexion was continued with mutual convenience On some manors in pastoral districts

general tightening up and defining of the lords' claims characterized the thirteenth century, particularly on certain great ecclesiastical estates where commutation had formerly been creeping in

One cause of this feudal reaction' was the rapid increase of population and the consequent land-hunger of the thirteenth century As the families of the villeins multiplied, the number of strips in the open field assigned to a single farmer grew less The pressure of population on the means of subsistence, and the competition for land to farm, enabled the lord s bailiff to drive harder bargains with the villeins, and to re enforce or enforce more strictly the demand for field work on the home farm as the condition for tenure of other lands

When therefore the fourteenth century began, the lords of the manors were in a strong position But then the tide turned once more The increase of population had slowed down in the reign of Edward II and it was again becoming usual to com mute field services for money rents, when the disaster of the Black Death (1348-9) came to speed the change

When a third or possibly a half of the inhabitants of the Kingdom died of plague in less than two years what was the effect on the social and economic position in the average English village? Obviously the survivors among the peasantry had the whip-hand of the lord and his bailiff Instead of the recent hunger for land there was a shortage of men to till it The value of farms fell and the price of labour went up at a bound The lord of the manor could no longer cultivate his demesne land with the reduced number of serfs while many of the strip holdings in the open fields were thrown back on his hands, because the families that farmed them had died of plague

But the lord s difficulty was the peasant s opportunity The number of strips in the open field held by a single farmer were increased by the amalgamation of derelict holdings and the villein cultivators of these larger units became in effect middle class yeomen employing hired labour Naturally they rebelled all the more against their own servile status and against the demands of the bailiff that they should still perform their 'workdays in person on the lord s demesne Meanwhile free



10 Practising at the butts

These Parliamentary laws to keep down wages were passed at the petit on of the Commons at the instance of the smaller gentry and tenant farmers husbands and land tenants as the Statutes called them The policy was d ctated by the new agricultural middle class rather than by the old fashioned feudal magnates though the great landlords supported the demand of their tenants because high wages indirectly endangered the payment of rents But the direct quarrel lay between two classes of peasants the small farmer and the landless labourer whom he hired their fathers might have worked their strips of land side by side in the village field and laboured together as serfs on the lord s demesne but the sons interests were opposed

These Parliamentary laws in restraint of wages mark the gradual change from a society based on local customs of personal service to a money economy that is nation wide Each medieval manor had been governed by its own custom which had now n many cases broken down and here we have an early attempt of Parliament to substitute national control The avowed purpose of the Statutes of Labourers is to prevent the ri e of wages and to a lesser degree of prices also Special justices are appointed to enforce the Parliamentary rates and to punish those who demand more

So the battle of the landless labourers against the farmers backed by the Parliamentary justices went on from the time



9 Sowing grain

where the peasants grew rich by selling wool, the bonda tenants took a lease of the whole of the lord s demesne a divided it among themselves

In a number of different ways, therefore, new classes of sul stantial yeomen came into existence *Some of them farmed th* lord s demesne, others the new lands lately enclosed from th waste, others took over strips in the old open field [9] Som dealt in corn, others in sheep and wool, others in a mixe husbandry The increase in their numbers and prosperity se the tone of the new England for centuries to come The moti of the English yeoman – his independence, his hearty goo nature, his skill in archery [10] – fills the ballads from the tim of the Hundred Years War to the Stuart era [1]

The wide gap between lord and villein that had characterized the society of the feudal manor is being filled up Indeed th villein serf is in process of extinction He is becoming a yeomar farmer, or else a landless labourer And between these twc classes enmity is now set The peasantry are divided among themselves as employers and employed, and an early phase o their strife is seen in the famous Statutes of Labourers

1 The word yeoman meant any sort of countryman of the *middling classes* usually a *farmer*, but sometimes a servant or an armed retainer (like the Knight s and the Canon s yeomen in the *Canterbury Tales*) In the earlier ballads Robin Hood is not a disguised earl but a yeman The idea that a yeoman must be a freeholder owning his own land is very late indeed



10 Practising at the butts

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the field work of the villein on the demesne lands rendering strife yet more acute

The battle for freedom differing in its precise character from manor to manor and from farm to farm led to sporadic acts of violence that prepared the way for the rising of 1381 The preamble of a statute passed by the Parliament of 1377 is significant. The lords of manors as well men of Holy Church as other complain that the villeins on their estates

> affirm them to be quit and utterly discharged of all manner of serfage due as well of their body as of their tenures and will not suffer any distress or other justice to be made upon them but do menace the ministers of their lords of life and member and which more is gather themselves in great routs and agree by such confederacy that every one shall aid other to resist their lords with strong hand [1]

If such had for years been the state of the countryside we

resist the Parliamentary laws fixing wages and unions of villein farmers to resist the custom of the manor had taught whole *communities to defy the governing class* by passive and active resistance Nor was social discontent confined to the village In the market towns overshadowed by great abbeys like St Albans and Bury St Edmunds not only the serfs but the burghers were at constant strife with the monks who refused the municipal liberties which successive kings had readily sold to towns fortunate enough to have grown up on royal land

The English rebels were not like the *jacquerie* of France starving men driven to violence by despair In wealth and independence their position was improving fast but not fast enough to satisfy their new aspirations And many of them had the self respect and discipline of soldiers having been armed and drilled in the militia Not a few of the famous

1 *Statutes of the Realm* II p 2



11 Many of the English rebels had the self respect and discipline of soldiers

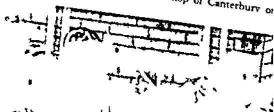
English longbowmen were found in the rebel ranks And in the forests lurked formidable allies of the movement, Robin Hood bands of outlaws peasants whom upper class justice had driven to the greenwood, professional poachers broken men, criminals, and discharged soldiers of the French war

These various formidable elements of social revolt had been inflamed by a propaganda of Christian Democracy, demanding in God s name freedom and justice for the poor Such was the preaching of John Ball and of many itinerant priests and friars [11] And the parish priest, being usually of much the same class as the villein farmer, often sympathized with his desire for freedom The idealism of the movement was Christian, in most cases not unorthodox, though some of Wyclif s Lollard preachers were involved But whether orthodox or heretic, the rebels had lost all respect for the privileges of the wealthy Churchmen, 'the Caesarean clergy allied to the upper class in resistance to the demands of the poor The rich monasteries, prelates, or laymen, who took the tithe of the parish and starved the parson, were hateful alike to the priest and his parishioners

In the south eastern half of England the chief area of the revolt the monasteries were specially unpopular and suffered much from the violence of the rebels The Prior of Bury St Edmunds was murdered by his own serfs In London Wat Tyler s men beheaded the Archbishop of Canterbury on Tower H ll because as Chancellor of the realm he represented the unpopular government In revenge the fighting Bishop of Norwich led in person the army that suppressed the rising in East Anglia Thus the equal tarian and the conservative elements always present together in the Christian Church were for a while at open war with one another

The rising originated from an unpopular poll tax Its oppressive and corrupt administration caused local revolts in Essex and Kent wh ch became the signal for a national rebellion in no less than twenty e ght counties The word was

12 Wat Tyler s men behead ng the Archb shop of Canterbury on Tower H ll



sent round by the popular leaders that 'John Ball hath rungen your bell Headed sometimes by the parish priest, sometimes by old archers, in a few cases by sympathetic gentry, the half-armed villagers and townsfolk rose They invaded the manor-houses and abbeys, extorted the rights they claimed, and burnt obnoxious charters and manor rolls Some murders were committed, and the gentry fled from their homes to hide in the thickets of the woods, whence the outlaws had just emerged

Then took place the most remarkable incident of our long social history – the capture of London Many of the village bands had been advised to march on the capital, where the popular leaders had allies The London mob and a party among the aldermen opened the gates to the rustic armies The panic of the governing class was such that the impregnable royal fortress of the Tower was surrendered to the rebels, much as the Bastille was surrendered in 1789 Unpopular characters were murdered, including the mild Archbishop Sudbury, whose head was placed over London Bridge [12] Lawyers were specially obnoxious And a massacre of foreign artisans was perpetrated by their trade rivals [1]

The cause of law and order had been lost by the poltroonery of the Government it was revindicated partly by courage and partly by fraud The boy King Richard II whom the rebels had everywhere declared to be on their side met their London army at Mile End and granted commutation of all servile dues for a rent of four pence an acre and a free pardon for all the rebels Thirty clerks were set to work drawing up charters of liberation and of pardon for the men of each village and manor, as well as more generally for every shire After this great concession, which satisfied the majority of the rebels, it became possible to deal sternly with the more recalcitrant Wat Tyler was slain at Smithfield in the presence of the mob he led [13] After that bold stroke by Mayor Walworth the

1 The only reference in the *Canterbury Tales* to the events of 1381 occurs in *The Nun s Priest s Tale* when the farm hands are chasing the fox



13 Wat Tyler slain at Smithfield in the presence of the mob he led

upper class recovered its courage called out its men at-arms, put down the rising in London and in the provinces, and punished it with cruel severity The charters of liberation, which had served their turn were repealed by Parliament as having been extorted under duress

The rebellion had been a great incident and its history throws a flood of light on the English folk of that day Historians cannot decide whether it helped or retarded the movement for the abolition of serfdom which continued at much the same pace after 1381 as before But the spirit that had prompted the rising was one of the chief reasons why serfdom died out in England as it did not die out on the Continent of Europe

Personal freedom became universal at an early date in our country and this probably is one reason for the ideological attachment of Englishmen to the very name of freedom But

many of the serfs won this freedom at the price of divorce from the soil, and the ever increasing wealth of the country was accompanied by greater inequalities of income The feudal manor under its lord had been a community of serfs all poor, but nearly all with rights of their own in the land to which they were bound, the land was tied to them as well as they to the land The modern village under the squire was a society of wealthy farmers, village craftsmen and a proletariat of free but landless labourers constantly drifting off to the towns The change from the one form of society to the other was long drawn out through centuries from the twelfth to the nineteenth

Typical of the new England of Chaucer s day was the yeoman farmer, Clement Paston whose descendants became great landowners and politicians in East Anglia in the following century Of him it was told that -

> He was a good plain husband[man] and lived upon his land that he had in Paston and kept thereon a plough all times in the year and sometimes in barleysell two ploughs The said Clement yede [went] at one plough both winter and summer and he rode to mill on the bare horseback with his corn under him and brought home meal again under him and also drove his cart with divers corns to Wynterton to sell as a good husband[man] ought to do Also he had in Paston a five score or a six score acres of land at the most [about four times a normal villein holding] and much thereof bondland to Gemyng ham Hall with a little poor water mill running by the river there Other livelode nor manors had he none nor in none other place [6 14 16]

Himself free he married a bondwoman He saved enough money to send their son to school and thence to the law and so founded the fortunes of the famous Norfolk family that in two generations acquired many manors in many another place - and left to posterity the *Paston Letters*

The story of the rising of 1381 reminds us how ill policed was the England of that day and how weak the arm of the law
[illegible] violence were everyday
[illegible] ust each guard his own
[illegible] s peace had never been



4. Ploughing w h oxen



15 The wate m l (th eel aps set in the n ll stream)



16 Carrying the corn uphill

very strong, but it had probably been stronger in the reign of Edward I and possibly even under Henry II The Hundred Years War enriched individuals with plunder and ransoms from France, and swelled the luxury of court and castle, but was a curse to the country as a whole It increased disorder and violence, by raising the fighting nobility and their retainers above the control of the Crown

The King was powerless to act against the great nobles, because his military resources were the resources commanded by the nobles themselves His army consisted, not of his own Life Guards and regiments of the line, but of numerous small bodies of archers and men-at arms enlisted and paid by earls and barons knights and professional soldiers of fortune, who hired out their services to the Government for a greater or less time Such troops might do well for the French war, and might rally round the throne on an occasion like the Peasants Rising when all the upper classes were threatened by a common danger But they could scarcely be used to suppress themselves, or to arrest the employers whose badges they wore on their coats, and whose pay jingled in their pockets Once indeed, in 1378, the Commons insisted that a special commission should be sent into the country to restore order But the new body was necessarily composed of great lords and their retainers who were soon found to be even more intolerable than the lawbreakers whom they were sent to suppress The Commons next year asked that they might be recalled, as the King s subjects were being brought into serfage to the said Seigneurs and commissioners and their retinues

A very similar story is told in *Piers Plowman*, where Peace comes to Parliament with a petition against Wrong who in his capacity of King s officer has broken into the farm, ravished the women, carried off the horses taken wheat from the granary, and left in payment a tally on the King s exchequer Peace complains that he has been unable to get the law of him, for he maintaineth his men to murder mine own' Such were the King s officers as known in the country districts They were really ambitious lords using the King s name to acquire wealth for themselves These evils were partly the result of the bankruptcy of the government The King

could not change the m . .
men to take the plac
the aid of the lords
own terms ... ...ais very much on their

Yet the peasant profited as much as he lost by the absence of police The villein farmer striving for freedom, the free workman in constant revolt against the Statute of Labourers, were neither of them in such real subjection to their 'betters' as the agricultural labourer in the well-policed countryside of the nineteenth century, when the poor had been deprived of bow and club, and had not yet been armed with the vote In the fourteenth century, when every man was expected to 'take his own part with stick or fist, with arrow or knife, a union of sturdy villagers was less easily overawed

The military system by which England fought the Hundred Years War strengthened the power not of the King himself but of more than one class of his subjects While the armies that invaded France were raised by the King contracting with lords and gentry for the service of their retainers, home defence was provided for by a militia compulsorily raised among the common people And this conscript militia was so well armed and trained that the Scots often rued their temerity in invading the land while the King and nobles were away in France The good yeoman archer whose limbs were made in England was not a retrospective fancy of Shakespeare, but an unpleasant reality for French and Scots, and a formidable consideration for bailiffs and justices trying to enforce servile dues or statutory rates of wages in the name of law, which no one, high or low, regarded with any great respect [17, 18] [1]

1 The secret of that greater efficacy of which English archers had the monopoly in Europe lay in the fact that the Englishman did not keep his left hand steady and draw his bow with his right, but keeping his right at rest upon the nerve, he pressed the whole weight of his body into the horns of his bow Hence probably arose the phrase bending a bow and the French of drawing one (W Gilpin in *Remarks on Forest Scenery* 1791)

This is what Hugh Latimer meant when he described how he was early taught not to draw with strength of arms as divers other nations do but with the strength of the body It was an art not easily learned.

uia fuisti adiutor meus



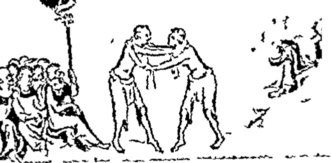


17 and 18 Every man was expected to 'take his own part with str

In most of the counties of England the King's writ ran though it was often evaded or defied Murderers and thieves, when not in the service of some great lord, were often obliged to fly to the greenwood, or to take sanctuary and then forswear the realm Sometimes they were actually arrested and brought into court Even then they often slipped through the meshes of law by pleading their clergy or by some other lawyer s trick But, at worst, a great many thieves and a few murderers were hanged by the King s justice every year The engine of law worked in the greater part of England though cumbrously, corruptly, and at random

But in the counties bordering on Scotland the King s writ can scarcely be said to have run at all War seldom ceased, and cattle raiding never On those roadless fells, society consisted of mounted clans of farmer warriors at feud among themselves and at war with the Scots No man looked to the King s officers to protect or avenge him In the land of the Border ballads all men were warriors and most women were heroines

To Chaucer it was an unknown distant, barbarous land – much further off than France – far in the North, I cannot tellen where' There the Percies and other border chiefs were building magnificent castles to resist the siege of the King of Scotland s armies – Alnwick, Warkworth, Dunstanburgh, Chipchase, Belsay, and many more The lesser gentry had their square 'peel towers', smaller copies of the castles of the great, there were no manor-houses, a product of relative peace The peasants lived in wooden shanties that the raiders burnt



fist with arrow or knife

as a matter of course while the inhabitants and their cattle hid in the woods or sheltered in the peels [19-21]

This state of things outlasted the Tudors who gave such firm peace to the rest of England Only after the union of the Crowns on the head of James Stuart had made an end of Border War (1603) did peaceful manor houses begin to rise beside the castles and peel towers of the north

One result of this long continuance of warlike habits, amid a sparse population was that a greater familiarity between high and low prevailed in those wild regions and lasted into modern times The moorland shepherd and the hind as the northern farm hand was called never became as subject to squire and farmer as the pauper labourer of the south in days to come There was always a breath of freedom blowing off the moors

While the north was still armed and fortified for war, and while the Marcher lords still relied on their castles to hold down the Welsh in the more civilized parts of England it was no longer usual for lords and gentlemen to build fortress-homes meant to withstand the siege of a regular army While the Black Prince was ravaging France war was no longer a normal incident in the English countryside But local violence was always to be feared, whether from the retainers of a bad neighbour the rebellious peasants of the village or outlaws from the greenwood

Modified precautions were therefore taken in the domestic architecture of the day The manor-houses that rose through

19 Alnwick Castle, Northumberland

20 Peel tower – Smailholm Tower, Roxburghshire (note the girdling wall for enclosing retainers' huts and cattle)



21 The *fortified* tower of Great Salkeld Church, Cumberland

out the southern and midland counties were seldom more than two storeys high and they were not completely castellated, but they presented narrow shot-hole windows on the sides that overlooked the moat, across which entry was made by the drawbridge The inner and safer aspect that looked on to an enclosed courtyard had larger windows and more domesticated architecture The courtyard was surrounded by suites of rooms, the demands of luxurious living had recently added more accommodation to the high hall, parlour and kitchen which had met the needs of a simpler age Holes in the roof no longer sufficed to conduct the smoke of the hearth away from throats and eyes, noble fireplaces were now built in the dwelling rooms and great chimneys in the thickness of the walls But the farm and the cottage were still without chimneys Near the manor house lay the formal garden or lady's pleasaunce, the traditional place for flirtation according to the poetry of the laws of love [22 23]

In hilly country a moat filled with water was less usual and the rise of ground took its place in the scheme of defence.



19 Alnwick Castle Northumberland

20 Peel tower Smailholm Tower Roxburghshire (note the girdling wall for enclosing retainers huts and cattle



While the square keeps of the Norman warriors were being deserted as no longer habitable, some of the finer Plantagenet castles were being enlarged and adapted to the uses of a new age. Not a few of them continued as royal or private palaces down to the time when Milton's *Comus* was acted in Ludlow Castle. Finally Cromwell's men stormed and dismantled a large proportion of the castles which had till then served as homes of the great.

The farms and cottages of the poor were built of logs or planks, or of uprights and beams supporting rubble and clay. The floors were usually bare earth, and the roof of thatch. But since these humble homes have disappeared, we know very little about them. Something has already been said about their



23 The formal garden or lady's pleasaunce

oxen on the village stubble and pasture, the poor beasts, half the size of modern cattle, were lean with scant fare and tough with years of tugging at the plough but some were slaughtered every Martinmas to be salted for the winter s food or were killed fresh for Christmas feasting [25 32]

Bacon was a more common dish on the cottage table but the number of pigs in the village herd depended on the extent and character of the waste On some manors the heaths and woods had shrunk to small proportions before the encroachments of assart farms enclosed for agriculture In others particularly in west and north the waste was essential to the life of many families Lonely squatters with or without leave built their huts and fed their beasts on some outlying bit of land And every lawful villager required timber from the trees on the

25 Spinning and carding wool

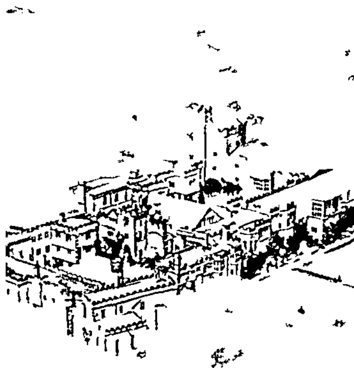


26 Keeping poultry



ınhabıtants durıng thıs perıod of socıal change and strıfe But nothıng ıs more dıffıcult to assess than the real degree of the peasants poverty or well beıng which dıffered greatly not only from place to place but from year to year Many of them by feedıng sheep acquıred consıderable wealth by the sale of the wool the great Englısh wool mart was supplıed largely by the peasants Their bread and ale depended on the uncertaın harvest of the common field and ın bad seasons there was local shortage or famıne But meat cheese and vegetables made up an equally ımportant part of their dıet Many peasants kept poultry and ate the eggs Most had a plot of land wıth theır cottage where peas beans or more prımitive worts were grown and where sometımes a cow or pıg was kept The farmers of the open field whether serf or free had each hıs

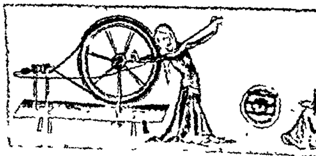
24 Haddon Hall Derbysh re (note the t o courtyards of th s half fortıfied manor house)



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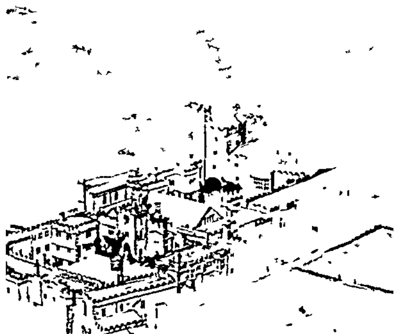


26 Keeping poultry



inhabitants, during this period of social change and strife But nothing is more difficult to assess than the real degree of the peasants poverty or well-being, which differed greatly not only from place to place but from year to year Many of them by feeding sheep acquired considerable wealth by the sale of the wool, the great English wool mart was supplied largely by the peasants Their bread and ale depended on the uncertain harvest of the common field, and in bad seasons there was local shortage or famine But meat, cheese, and vegetables made up an equally important part of their diet Many peasants kept poultry and ate the eggs Most had a plot of land with their cottage, where peas, beans, or more primitive worts were grown, and where sometimes a cow or pig was kept The farmers of the open field, whether serf or free, had each his

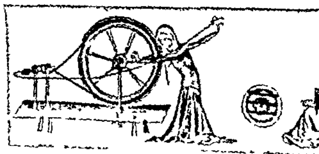
24 Haddon Hall Derbyshire (note the two courtyards of this half fortified manor-house)



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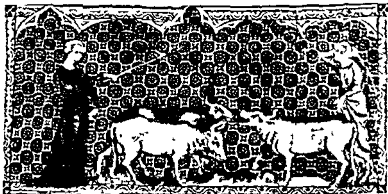


26 Keeping poultry





27 Feeding swine



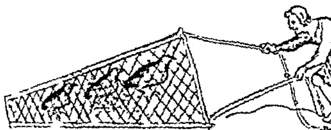
28 Cattle lean with scant fare



29 The uncertain harvest of the common field



30 Catching fish



... tting partridge



32 [illegible]

waste, to build his cottage, to warm his hearth and cook his food, to make his carts, ploughs, farm tools, and household furniture The rights of the customary tenants differed from manor to manor, but often they had the privilege of cutting wood for building and carpentry, and of taking sticks for fuel by hook and crook , that is, by pulling branches from standing trees The waste, too, meant pigpannage and extra pasture for cattle and sheep, the latter often the most valuable item in a peasant s budget by the sale of the wool In these respects the comfort and wealth of the villager diminished as the cornfields encroached on wild nature There was gain with loss and loss with store

But there is other meat besides beef and mutton, poultry and bacon The waste and the woodland swarmed with game In the King s forests, an ever diminishing area, and in the warrens and enclosures of lords and gentry, which were always on the increase, the deer and lesser game were guarded by severe laws, and still more effectively by keepers who administered club law of their own without bothering the King s courts Poaching was not only the livelihood of outlaws but the passion of men of all classes – gentry clerks of Holy Church, besides farmers and workmen seeking a pheasant or hare for the pot [1]

In 1389 the Commons complained in Parliament that artificers and labourers, and servants and grooms keep grey-hounds and other dogs and on the holy days when good Christian people be at Church, hearing divine service, they go hunting in parks, warrens, and coneyries of lords and others, to the very great destruction of the same Evil indeed is the heart of man! Henceforth let no layman with less than forty shillings a year in land, and no priest or clerk with less than ten pounds income a year, be so bold as to keep sporting nets or dogs So the Statute decreed, how far it was observed may well be doubted [2] *There were moreover, great regions of moor fen,*

1 The proverbial efficiency of the poacher turned gamekeeper is as old as Chaucer

> *A thief of venison, that hath forlaft*
> His likerousness and all his olde craft
> Can kepe a forest best of any man (*Doctor s Tale*)

2 *Statutes of the Realm*, II, p 65

and woodland where game was not strictly preserved and could be taken with little or no risk of challenge

Rabbits, then called 'coneys', were a plague in many parts of medieval England, and were snared and dug out by all classes, except in private warrens [32] To take and eat small birds like thrushes and larks was then as usual in our island as it still is on the Continent, they were limed and netted in great numbers both by the peasants and by the sporting gentry [32] But most of all did it rejoice the farmer's heart to slay secretly for his own pot one of the legion of privileged birds from the dovecot of the manor-house, whose function in life was to grow plump on the peasants' corn till they were fit for the lord's table![1] Then there were trout in the streams and meres, and great pike in the 'stews' (ponds) of manor house and abbey Of Chaucer's Franklin we read –

> It snowed in his house of meat and drinke
> Of alle dainties that men coulde thinke
> After the sundry seasons of the year
> So changed he his meat and his supper
> Full many a fat partridge had he in mewe [cage]
> And many a bream and many a luce in stewe
> [pike in fishpond] [30, 31, 34-6]

The gentry spent much of their lives hunting the deer with horse and hound, or flying hawks at pheasant, partridge, and heron or lying out at night to net the fox and the badger [37 41] Such field sports, and tilting in tournaments before the gallery of ladies were the lighter sides of their life, the more serious were war abroad, and at home law suits, national politics and local administration[2] The improvement of agricultural methods did not interest them as much as their

[1] In the fifteenth century the Fellows of King's College Cambridge ate or sold from two to three thousand doves a year from the great dovecot of their Grantchester estate

[2] The knights of the shire (county members in the House of Commons) were busy in local administration Miss Wood Legh has ascertained that of 1 636 persons who were knights of the shire in the fifty-odd Parliaments of Edward III 125 served as escheators, 371 as collectors at tenths and fifteenths (taxes) 381 as sheriffs and 641 as Justices of the Peace Chaucer's Franklin is an example (*Review of English Studies* April 1928)

descendants The historian of English farming has said 'Feudal barons are rarely represented as fumbling in the recesses of their armour for samples of corn.'[1] But the break-up of the feudal manor, and the new opportunities it afforded of producing for the market, opened the way to agricultural improvement and thereby encouraged the landlord class to take a greater interest in farming methods Indeed, Lord Berkeley, though very exceptional, was a great improver of his land a fourteenth-century Coke of Norfolk

By self-flattering fallacy, some of our city-bred folk today suppose that their ancestors, because they were accustomed to country sights and sounds on workdays as well as week-ends, cared nothing for the loveliness around them No doubt many of them raised their eyes to nature s beauty as little as the Philistines of today But the poetry of the age of Chaucer and Langland shows that they were by *no means* all so indifferent

Here, in an alliterative poem of the mid fourteenth century, is a poacher s account of dawn in the woods as he waits for the deer

In the monethe of Maye when mirthes bene fele,
And the sesone of somere when softe bene the wedres,
Als I went to the wodde my werdes to dreghe,
In to the schawes my-selfe a schotte me to gete
At ane hert or ane hynde happen as it myghte
And as Dryghtyn the day droue from the heuen,
Als I babade one a banke be a bryme syde,
There the gryse was grene growen with floures –
The primrose the pervynke, and the piliole the riche –
The dewe appon dayses donkede full faire
Burgons and blossoms and braunches full swete,
And the mery mystes full myldely gane falle
The cukkowe, the cowschote, kene were they bothen,
And the throstills full throly threpen in the bankes,
And iche foule in that frythe faynere than other
That the derke was done and the daye lightenede
Hertys and hyndes one hillys thay gouen,
The foxe and the filmarte thay flede to the erthe
The hare hurkles by hawes, and harde thedir dryves,
And ferkes faste to hir fourme and fatills hir to sitt

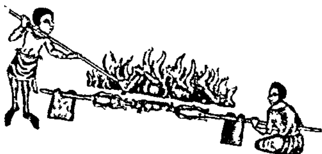
1 Ernle p 31





37 and 38 Hunting







34 and 35 It snowed in his house of meat and drinke



36 The lord of the manor's table

the change from medieval to modern might be ascribed to the age of Chaucer He himself like Dante is known to us clad in the dignified long gown and plain hood – the distinctively medieval dress that the Franciscan brotherhood still preserves in our midst in its simplest form. But Chaucer s fashionable contemporaries especially the younger sort abandoned the decent gown for a short coat or jacket and displayed the symmetry of their legs in tight fitting hosen The new mode resembled in fundamental form the coat and trousers of the modern male biped but by no means *in our drab detail and* monotony of dullness In Richard II s court, coats and hosen blazed with colour One leg might be draped in red the other in blue Men wore their estates on their backs and flashed in jewels and costly stuffs no less than their wives Following the fashion of an extravagant court gilded youth was everywhere expressed in fancy Sleeves slod upon the earth shoes with long toe points chained to the waist prevented the wearer from kneeling to say his prayers [42–6]

The long gown did not however go out of use among the more sober part of mankind till Tudor times And sometimes

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foll ng is the translat on of these lines given in H S Bennett s *Lif n the English Manor* p 271

: May when there are many things to enjoy and in the summer season when airs are soft I went to the wood to take my luck and in among the shaws to get a shot at hart or hind as it should happen And as the Lord drove the day through the heavens I stayed on a bank bes de a brook where the grass was green and starred with flowers primroses periwinkles and the rich pennyroyal The dew dappled the dais es most beautifully and also the buds blossoms and branches while around me the soft mists began to fall Both the cuckoo and p geon were singing loudly and the throstles in the banks des eagerly poured out their songs and every bird in the wood seemed more del ghted than his neighbour that darkness was done and the dayl ght returned Harts and hinds betake themselves to the h lls the fox and polecat seek their earths the hare squats by the hedges hurr es and hastens thither to her forme and prepares to lurk there

The hart paused went on caut ously staring here and there but at last he bent down and began on his feed Then I hauled to the hook [i.e the trigger of the cross bow] and smote the hart It so happened that I hit him behind the left shoulder he had fallen down dead as a door na l

41 Cl [illegible]

he m n self became an extravagance men of high rank

With much absurd and ephemeral luxury came in much solid comfort and new habits of life that have survived Now

been poured into England during the early and more successful part of the Hundred Years War revolutionized the primitive economy of the English feudal household just as among the ancient Romans the tribute and plunder of the Mediterranean overturned the austere simplicity of Camillus and Cato French nobles taken in war waited sometimes for years till their ransoms could be wrung from their peasants and meanwhile they lived as honoured guests in the country houses of their English captors they hunted with the men made love to the ladies and taught English provincial simplicity that every gentleman must have this fashion in his clothes or that dish on his table

Under such tutors luxury increased and with it commerce grew and refinement spread by the very means which the moralists denounced The merchants of the town rejoiced to supply the noblemen s courts with every new fashion and requirement in dress furniture or food By their own magnificence and outlay the feudal lords were helping the rise of the mercantile classes who were one day to take their place Most of our town manufactures and overseas commerce, and almost all European trade with the East were conducted to supply the luxuries of castle and manor house and not as in modern times the needs of the mass of the population English towns and English trade would have made little headway in those days if they had catered only for the farm and the cottage

46 Chaucer reading his poems to a noble company

the gown itself became an extravagance, men of high rank

With much absurd and ephemeral luxury came in much solid comfort and new habits of life that have survived Now for the first time in our country, gentlemen's families retired from the great hall where they used to feed in patriarchal community with their household, and ate their more fashionable meals in private The tribute and plunder of France that had been poured into England during the early and more successful part of the Hundred Years War revolutionized the primitive economy of the English feudal household, just as, among the ancient Romans, the tribute and plunder of the Mediterranean overturned the austere simplicity of Camillus and Cato French nobles, taken in war, waited sometimes for years till their ransoms could be wrung from their peasants, and meanwhile they lived as honoured guests in the country houses of their English captors, they hunted with the men, made love to the ladies, and taught English provincial simplicity that every gentleman must have this fashion in his clothes or that dish on his table

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46 Chaucer reading his poems to a noble company

CHAPTER TWO 1340–1400

CHAUCER S ENGLAND

TOWN AND CHURCH

In the fourteenth century the English town was still a rural and agricultural community, as well as a centre of industry and commerce It had its stone wall or earth mound to protect it, distinguishing it from an open village But outside lay the town field unenclosed by hedges, where each citizen farmer cultivated his own strips of cornland and each grazed his cattle or sheep on the common pasture of the town which usually lay along the riverside as at Oxford and Cambridge [1] In 1388 it was laid down by Parliamentary Statute that in harvest time journeymen and apprentices should be called on to lay aside their crafts and should be compelled to cut gather and bring in the corn mayors bailiffs and constables of towns were to see this done [2] In Norwich the second city of the Kingdom the weavers till long after this period, were conscripted every year to fetch home the harvest Even London was no exception to the rule of a half rustic life There was none of the rigid division between rural and urban which has prevailed since the Industrial Revolution No Englishman then was ignorant of all country things as the great majority of Englishmen are today [47 50]

The town was more insanitary than the village and was often visited by plague But it was not as in later centuries, crowded thick with slums Its houses still stood pleasantly amid gardens,

1 Cambridge was protected not by walls but by water the river on the west the King s ditch on the east

2 *Statutes of the Realm* II 56



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:n fields and enclosures ere found together from the
dle Ages to the nineteenth century

meinie who infringed the right of a London citizen or challenged the jurisdiction of the Mayor

Yet great as was the power of London and considerable as were the "liberties of other towns they were loyal members of a State whose Parliament legislated, partly by their advice, on their economic concerns in so far as they were national, and in the fourteenth century trade was becoming more and more national without ceasing to be municipal The history of all English towns was swallowed up in the history of England which they helped to make while in Germany, not then a nation the history of N
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walls and if possible
Scottish raiders ban ... of great
men at feud with the privileges of the borough The principle of conscription raised no difficulty in the mind of the medieval Englishman How indeed could ...
defend h
For pur
like digg ... repairing the town bridge, helping ... the harvest of the town fields very occasionally cleaning or mending the street in front of his own house, a man might be called on for personal service by the civic authorities Such work in the common cause was not regarded as servile, like work on the lord's demesne No one then thought that liberty consisted in avoiding military or other obligations on the performance of which the cherished liberties of his town and of his fellow burghers ultimately depended Self help and self government were for long centuries taught to the English in the school of town life and to a less degree in the shire court and in the manor court of the village There were no rights without duties

Political strife ran strong and fierce in the streets of every town of England not the strife of national parties, but the

orchards, paddocks, and farmyards For the number inhabitants was still very small – two or three thousand fc town of fair size

The life of the burgher combined the advantages of to and countryside The all pervading atmosphere of natu beauty unconsciously affected the language and thoughts of Chaucer was a Londoner, but, in describing a beautiful a sprightly young woman, he employs four metaphors, c taken from the Tower mint, the other three from famili vulgar sights sounds, and smells of the rustic farm

Full brighter was the shining of her hewe
Than in the Tower the noble yforged newe
But of her song it was as loud and yerne [brisk]
As any swallow sitting on a berne [barn]
Thereto she could skip and make game
As any kid or calf following his dame
Her mouth was sweet as brachet or the meeth
[honeyed ale or mead]
Or hoard of apples laid in hay or heeth

How simple, strong, yet exquisite it is – a lost quality becau the influences of daily life that made it are lost, or at least a overmastered by others more ugly and mechanical It w equally characteristic of the age of Chaucer that the your woman so beautifully described was no better than she shoul have been[1]

But these little towns half rural though they were, ha burgher *pride of the most exclusive kind Their constai preoccupation was to keep and extend the privileges of sel* government and the monopoly of local trade which they ha bought from king or lord abbot or bishop To defend th merchants of their own town in their dangerous journeys, an to gather in their debts owing in other towns municipal actio was quasi diplomatic Norwich talked to Southampton a England to France Commercial treaties between towns wer common As to London, its power of self government whicl included jurisdiction over wide territories up and down th river, might have been the envy of many *German free cities* Woe to the King's *officer, or to one of John of Gaunt*

1 *The Miller's Tale*

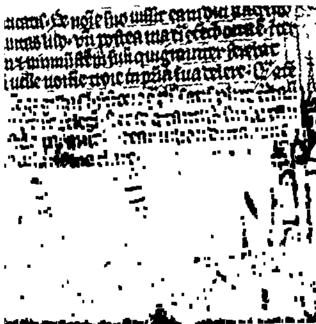
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a State whose Parliament legislated, partly by their advice, on their economic concerns in so far as they were national, and in the fourteenth century trade was becoming more and more national without ceasing to be municipal The history of all English towns was swallowed up in the history of England which they helped to make, while in Germany, not then a nation, the history of Nuremberg and of the Hanse Towns form separate chapters in the annals of Europe

But even in England and even during the Hundred Years War, national sentiment and loyalty to the Kingdom at large made no such daily and urgent claims as did the civic patriotism that a man felt for his own town The first duty of the burgher was to play his part in the city militia, to defend the walls and if possible the fields of the town against French or Scottish raiders bands of outlaws, or the retainers of great

defend him and his fellows from dangers constantly at his door? For purposes of war and police, and for town-works of all sorts like digging a town ditch or drain, repairing the town bridge, helping in the harvest of the town fields, very occasionally cleaning or mending the street in front of his own house, a man might be called on for personal service by the civic authorities Such work in the common cause was not regarded as servile, like work on the lord s demesne No one then thought that liberty consisted in avoiding military or other obligations on the performance of which the cherished liberties of his town and of his fellow burghers ultimately depended Self-help and self government were for long

in the school of tow



its abbey and its hall which Rufus had built and which Richard II was adorning with rafters of oak Westminster had become the recognized centre of royal administration, law, and Parliament [45] although it had no commerce and no muni cipal privileges of its own and was only a village at great

powers from which modern English liberty has sprung is

was very different from its previous relation to the Jews, who had been mere sponges in the King's hand to suck up his subjects' wealth, helpless clients whom he alone protected from popular malice and massacre. But the English merchants who lent money to government for the Hundred Years War could give or withhold their aid as they chose, and they took advantage of the need the King had of them to bargain for commercial or other advantages for themselves or their families, for their city, their craft, or their trade.

It was in these circumstances that the network of Edward III's financial, home, and foreign policy was elaborated. The Hundred Years War was not merely an adventure for military plunder and dynastic ambition, it was also an attempt to keep open the market for our wool and cloth trade in Flanders and in France. The alliance with Van Artevelde and the Flemish burghers against France was at once diplomatic and commercial.

English national policy was continually changing under the pressure of the King's necessities, and of rival interests among his own subjects and among his allies oversea. Experiments in protection and free trade, neither yet an established doctrine, were made in bewildering alternation. The 'mercantilist' era of a fixed protectionist policy had not yet come, but the country was already groping towards it. Navigation laws to exclude foreign vessels from trading in English ports were passed as early as the reign of Richard II, but could not be enforced because our merchant shipping was not large enough, until Stuart times, to cope alone with the ever increasing volume of our trade. English merchants did much of their overseas trade in foreign bottoms.

But the English marine was at last beginning to be formidable. Edward III used it to clear the Channel of foreign pirates, and succeeded for a number of years. The fleet that defeated the French at Sluys (1340) was not a royal navy: it was composed of the merchant ships of many different towns, temporarily conscripted to fight under a royal admiral. Cannon had as yet no place in warfare at sea. Still, as at Salamis, ships rammed and grappled each other, and the fight was conducted with swords, spears, and arrows, like a battle on land [52]

The 'Staple', where English goods for export had to be

Calais which English arms won and held as the port of entry into France When the wool reached Calais it was the common practice for the foreign buyer to pay a certain sum in cash and give bills for the rest The discounting of bills by *assigning* or transferring them was also usual so that the trade custom of circulating bills from one creditor to another is at least five hundred years old [1]

Most of the English goods exported through the Staple at Calais consisted of raw wool but woollen cloth was constantly gaining ground till in Tudor times the export of cloth killed the export of raw wool But in Chaucer s day and for long after the men who lent most money to the King were the Staplers who exported wool to feed the foreign looms and the customs levied at the Staple on exported wool were the great source of royal revenue [2]

1 Lipson i p 549 ed 1937

2 Both wool and cloth were collected taxed and sold at the Staple But the Staple Company the Staplers *par excellence* dealt in wool not in cloth and their gradual decline was due to the increase of the export of cloth by the Merchant Adventurers In the early fourteenth century wool exports were 30 000 sacks a year and cloth exports about 5 000 cloths In the middle of the sixteenth century the wool exports were 4 000 sacks and the cloth exports well over 100 000 cloths See E E Rich *The Ordinance Book of the Merchants of the Staple* 1937 On the early history of the Staple see Eileen Power op cit

51 The Master of the Staple in audience of Duke Albert



These London–Calais merchants, with whom the King had to bargain for loans and levies as if with a fourth estate of the realm, had extensive business and personal connexions with wool-growing districts like the Cotswolds, where they and their rivals the clothiers bought estates and founded many of the great county families of western England In 1401 was laid to rest in Chipping Campden the body of William Grevel, late citizen of London and flower of the wool merchants of England, and his stone house is still an ornament of the most beautiful village street now left in the island for Chipping Campden was not an ordinary Gloucestershire village but a collecting centre for England s greatest trade [54 55]

It is in fact to the age of Chaucer that Professor Postan points as the great breeding season of English capitalism; in the early phases of the Hundred Years War, the time when the exigencies of royal finance new experiments in taxation, speculative ventures with wool, the collapse of Italian finance, and the beginning of the new cloth industry, all combined to bring into existence a new race of war financiers and commercial speculators, army purveyors and wool monopolists [1]

If the capitalist as financier and public creditor was found chiefly in the wool trade the beginnings of the capitalist as organizer of industry were found during the same period in the cloth manufacture

While raw wool was still the chief article of export, domestic needs were supplied for the most part by cloth made in England In the times of Ancient Britons Romans and Saxons and ever since the spare moments of the housewife, her maids, and daughters had been devoted to spinning the supposed occupation of our mother Eve And equally from the earliest times the more difficult art of weaving had been practised by men specially trained as websters sitting all day each at the loom in his own cottage to provide the coarse clothes of the local peasantry In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a better class of manufacture was conducted by weavers gilds in many towns, including London Lincoln, Oxford and Nottingham In Henry III s reign, Stamford cloth was well

1 *Economic History Review*, May 1939 p 165

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he world, dictating the policy of our statesmen and providing he programmes of our parties, causing alliances, treaties, and wars The cloth trade held its place as incomparably the most important English industry, till the far distant day when coal was wedded to iron For centuries it occupied men's daily thoughts in town and village, second only to agriculture, our literature and common speech acquired many phrases and metaphors borrowed from the manufacture of cloth – thread of discourse , spin a yarn , unravel a mystery , web of life , 'fine-drawn , homespun , tease – while all unmarried women were put down as 'spinsters'

Already in the fourteenth century it was evident that the rapid expansion of the cloth trade required a new economic organization The manufacture of raw wool into the best cloth called not for one craft alone but for many – carding, spinning, weaving, fulling dyeing, cloth finishing Therefore a large expansion of the cloth industry for the market at home and abroad could not be organized by the craft guilds which had done so much to improve weaving in former centuries The entrepreneur, with a more than local outlook and with money at his command, was required to collect the raw material, the half manufactured and the finished article, and pass them on from craftsman to craftsman and from place to place, from village to town, from town to port, and finally to bring a standardized article to the best market For all this capital was needed

Capitalism as the organizer of industry is first clearly visible in the cloth trade Already in the lifetime of Chaucer, the *capitalist clothier* could be found, employing many different people in many different places He was a social type more modern than medieval, and quite different from the master craftsman labouring at the bench with his apprentices and journeymen[1] The ultimate future lay with the capitalist

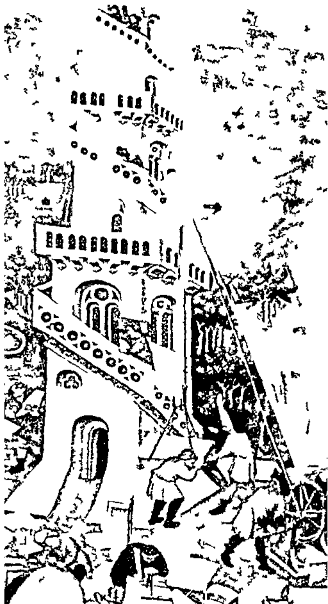
1 Until the coming of elaborate machinery in the eighteenth century, capitalism did not mean factories Except for the water-worked fulling-mills, the capitalist employed the various workmen in their own homes, and they owned their own tools and plant This is the domestic' system of industry The capitalist had indeed to provide warehouses to store the goods

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labour in the town ill paid and uncared for But in the guilds themselves there had been much harmony and content

In the age of Chaucer these things were changing The expansion of industry and trade were bringing variety of function and an increasing difference of monetary reward The master was becoming less the brother craftsman and more the entrepreneur engaged in organizing the business and selling the goods Some apprentices became masters especially if they married their master s daughter But most apprentices could only look to become journeymen and few journeymen could any longer look to become masters In proportion to the increasing numbers engaged in the trade, the number of masters was less than of old The harmony of the craft guild had depended on the identity of interest of its members and on a certain sense of social equality among them But this was growing less every year The distinction between employer and employed was becoming more marked There was also an increasing difference between the rich trading master and the poor manufacturing master who worked with a couple of journeymen to make the goods that the great man sold

And so we find in the towns of the fourteenth century not only occasional strikes for higher wages inside the guild but in some cases the formation of permanent yeomen guilds to champion the interest of the employees and perform the fighting functions of a modern trade union In some trades and in some towns these yeomen guilds also included small master craftsmen For they too were opposed to the richer masters who were ceasing to be craftsmen at all and were concerned only in selling the goods The trader and the manual worker were in some trades beginning to be separated and the trader was assuming control of the industry by his command of the craft guild or the livery company The manual worker whether journeyman or small master was losing most of his economic independence and was acquiring an inferior status The government of the towns was in the hands of the big merchants But the modern trade union spirit was already active [1]

1 The gangs of workmen who built the glorious cathedrals and lovely churches and manor houses of the later Middle Ages were organized not as a guild but on a capitalist basis Trade unionism was

table privileges and her inalienable and ever increasing wealth, her leaders took no steps to pacify the clamour of moral disapprobation and the growls of envious greed that rose on every side against her and her possessions. The laity were not only more critical but were far better educated and therefore more formidable than in the days of Anselm and Becket, when the clergy had enjoyed a fairly close monopoly of trained intelligence. The Church, however, refused to do anything to satisfy the general discontent, and during the fifteenth century the storm subsided. But the respite was not lasting, and the refusal of all reform under the Plantagenets led under the Tudors to revolution.

Many of the clergy themselves were critics of the Church as outspoken as the laity. The scholars of Oxford and not a few of the priests serving parishes whose tithes went to rich monks and foreign prelates were reformers and even rebels. Moreover the accused parties themselves denounced one another with the intemperance of language habitual in medieval controversy. The friars attacked the bishops and secular clergy, who repaid their abuse with interest. In Chaucer's *Tales* it is the friar and the summoner who expose each other's tricks, to make mirth for the company of laymen. From every quarter, within and without the Church, the air resounded with attacks on the various orders of clergy. [63, 64]

Yet nothing was done. The Church, unlike the manor and the guild, could not be transformed by the natural working of economic change or by the mere pressure of opinion. Definite measures of administrative and legislative reform were required, and there was no machinery to effect them, except such as rested in the hands of the Pope and the bishops. But the Pope, who in former ages had done so much, now did less than nothing to improve the condition of the Church in England. He used his powers to foster abuses that brought wealth to the Roman Court, simony, non-residence, plurality, the sale of indulgences, all of which offended the roused conscience of a censorious age.

Yet even without the support of the Pope, the English bishops might have done at least something. And the bishops in the age of Chaucer were, with scarcely an exception, able, hard-working, highly respectable men. Why then did they not at least attempt to make some reform in the Church?



64 Monk in the stocks

of secretarial work by the clergy and of the principal offices of State by the bishops was beginning to arouse a reasonable jealousy There were now ready to hand intelligent and highly trained lawyers like Knyvet and gentlemen like Richard Scrope well capable of conducting the highest business of the State It was men of this type who under the Tudor monarchs replaced both prelates and nobles as the instruments of royal government Already under the later Plantagenets the first signs of such a change were visible Owing to a petition of the House of Commons of 1371 against the employment of clergy in the royal service laymen for some years alternated with clerics as chancellors and treasurers of the realm

Occupied as they were by the cares of secular office the bishops paid little attention to the deplorable state of their dioceses If rectories were empty or filled with scandalous persons or under paid substitutes it had always been so If the Pope pushed the sale of indulgences and sham relics the bishops could only regard it as a legitimate piece of business without thinking more of the matter they supplied the Pardoners with episcopal letters commending their wares to the public.

One branch of their duties the proper control of the Spiritual Courts the bishops neglected with unfortunate results As regards the business of wills and marriages, then conducted by the Church the ecclesiastical tribunals were no more corrupt or inefficient than the lay judges and lawyers of that time But the more specifically religious function of the bishop s court which he usually left to the archdeacon, was causing grave scandal in Chaucer s day, as his *Friar s Tale*

heretical missionaries by John Ball's agitators of Christian Democracy Whether we regard these interlopers as sowing tares in the wheat or as enriching the Lord's harvest they played a great part in the religious and intellectual life of the nation They carried the latest thoughts teaching and news of the time to remote farms and hamlets whose inhabitants never moved from the neighbourhood and could read no written word These religious roundsmen on foot and on horse back were always on the move along the winding muddy roads and green lanes of England and to their peripatetic fellowship must be added the more secularly minded minstrels tumblers jugglers beggars and charlatans of every kind and pilgrims pious and worldly alike All these wayfarers acted the part of microbes as their historian Jusserand[1] has said infecting the stationary part of the population with the ideas of a new age and of a larger world They too were preparing the change from medieval to modern [65–73]

But the parish priest reigned within the walls of his church and there he said the mass attended on Sundays by the greater part of the village It was the heart of medieval religion

The peasant as he stood or knelt on the floor of the church each Sunday could not follow the Latin words but good thoughts found a way into his heart as he watched what he revered and heard the familiar yet still mysterious sounds Around him blazed on the walls frescoes of scenes from the scriptures and the lives of saints and over the rood loft was the Last Judgement depicted in lively colours paradise opening to receive the just and on the other side flaming hell with devil executioners tormenting naked souls Fear of hell was a most potent force pitilessly exploited by all preachers and confessors both to enrich the Church and to call sinners to repentance [74 75] The orthodox consigned the heretics and the heretics consigned the bishops to eternal flames and all parties agreed there would scarce be room in hell of friars there is such throng

The peasant knew some of the sayings of Christ and incidents from his life and those of the saints besides many Bible

[1] J J Jusserand *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages (XIVth Century)*







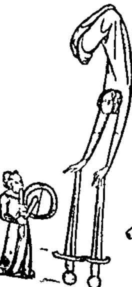


o and 7 Puppets

72 and 73 M nstrels jugglers charlatans of everv k nd











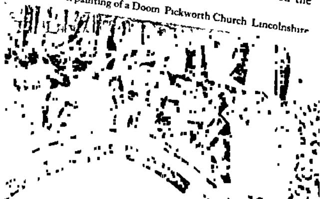
parish priest, but very frequently to the intruding friar, who gave absolution more easily, often it may well be more intelligently, and often (so all said) more corruptly for money, for a good meal, or for other favours

But there is a great deal more to be said about the friars than that Like Rob Roy they were 'ower bad for blessing, and ower gude for banning The black friars of St Dominic and yet more the grey friars of the gentle St Francis had been the true evangelical force in England in the thirteenth century, and in the fourteenth they still shouldered most of the missionary work of the Church They were still the great preachers and had created a demand for preaching The illiterate folk of an age awakening to intelligence demanded more and yet more of the spoken word, and could seldom get enough of it from the parish priest

And so the friars still set the pace in the age of Chaucer It was in imitation as well as in rivalry that the Wycliffites laid such stress on preaching to the people If Protestants in times to come attached more importance to the pulpit than to the altar, they were only carrying further a movement begun by the friars [76]

If the orthodox secular clergy denounced the friars for filling their sermons with idle and unedifying stories to attract the vulgar, it was partly because those sermons attacked the

Medieval wall painting of a Doom Pickworth Church Lincolnshire



medieval Church is the mother of us all [1] As Chaucer himself said

Ther n is no newé guise that it n as old

On the other hand there were elements in later English Protestantism which were not medieval at all Family worship and the religious dedication of family life and of business life are later Protestant accretions They had no place in medieval ideals or practice For medieval ideals derived from more purely ascetic and anti mundane sources in primitive Christianity to which practice indeed seldom conformed but which held the field in theory

While the enemies of the friars complained that they did too much and intruded too busily where they had no rightful place the monks of this age were accused of doing too little The fire of religious enthusiasm and the light of learning burnt low within the walls of monasteries that once had supplied England with noble leadership The King no longer sent for some saintly abbot to implore him to take pity on the land and exchange the government of his House for the government of a great diocese The cloister of Canterbury no longer rivalled the University of Paris in scholarship and philosophy the higher thought and education of the country was now concentrated at Oxford and there the chief intellectual influences were the friars and the secular clergy Nor did the monks any longer as in the days of the Barons War play a patriotic and formidable part in politics Chronicles were still compiled in monasteries but they merely carried on the literary tradition of a former age while the worldling Froissart was setting up a new standard of history In the thirteenth century Matthew Paris of St Albans cloister had been a truly great historian but the monastic chroniclers of Chaucer s day even the best of them like Walsingham had no power to grasp the relative importance of events or to appreciate the significance of what was going on in the world outside the abbey close The monk had little thought except for the interests of his House His

1 B L Manning *The People s Faith in the Time of Wyclif* pp 186–8 and *passim* G R Owst *Preaching in Medieval England* pp xii 91 5 and *passim* (Cambridge Press)



76 The friars 'were still the great preachers'

sloth of bishops, monks, and clergy and the corruption of the archdeacon and his summoner In the first part of Wyclif's career the friars were his allies against the 'possessionate clergy', and it was only when he propounded his heresy on transubstantiation that the mendicant orders became his most effective enemies In theory the friars, unlike the monks, lived by begging alms, had no property of their own, and preached the doctrine of evangelical poverty so dear to St Francis In practice they had now amassed wealth and treasure which they stored in their magnificent convents Wyclif liked their theory and condemned their practice

If we seek the origins of some of the distinctive traits of English Puritanism, of its asceticism, its war on sin, its sabbatarian rigour, its fear of hell, its attacks on the bishops and wealthy clergy, its crude denunciation of opponents, its vigorous and soul-stirring sermons, its tendency to unctuous sentiment, its lapses into hypocrisy, its equalitarian appeal to the poor and lowly, they are all to be found in the medieval Church, and particularly in the work of the friars But not of the friars alone, clerk Langland was Bunyan's forerunner, and Wyclif would have found his ideal of priesthood realized by Latimer and Wesley Those scholars who have most recently and most fully studied the sermons and other pious literature in prose and verse of the fourteenth century are most averse to 'the appropriation of medieval religion by any modern party or the repudiation of it by any other party For the

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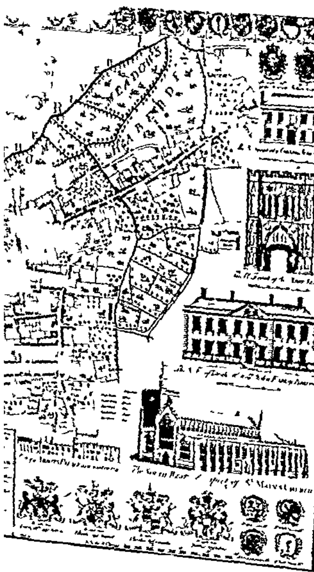


77 and 78 Hospitality for pilgrims

MEADOWS



Bury St Edmunds in 1776 showing the extent of the former Abbey's grounds



as idle drones living at the expense of the impoverished kingdom The Commons declared that a third of the wealth of England was in the hands of the Church most of it belonging to the regular clergy And yet the monks were constantly in financial straits sometimes through their magnificent architectural zeal for enlarging and beautifying the abbey and its church sometimes through sheer mismanagement The abbot who like Carlyle s Samson had good business ability among his other qualities seems to have been rare in later times though some of the cathedral priories like Canterbury continued to manage their finances and administer their far scattered manorial estates well The Black Death hit the monastic landlord as hard as the lay The Italian and English moneylenders who had succeeded the Jews charged just as high interest and the monks were reckoned an easy prey The monasteries often speculated in a form of life annuity known as a corrody whereby the abbey borrowed money in return for an undertaking to keep the creditor for the rest of his life – and often he lived disastrously long

In earlier times the demesne lands of monastic manors administered by the abbey s own officials direct had often been admirable examples of estate management and agricultural improvement not only in the sheep runs of Yorkshire dales but in mixed arable and pasture regions of the south But in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the demesne lands of the abbeys were increasingly let out on long leases to laymen who either farmed them or sublet them to others In this and other ways the lay control and enjoyment of monastic wealth began long before the final Dissolution

There were occasional scandals in monasteries and the orthodox Gower was as certain as Wyclif that the monks were unchaste But if allowance is made for the low standards of all classes in that age and for the peculiar difficulties of the celibate clergy there is no rea on to think that the monasteries were wonderfully bad in that respect Certainly the ascetic impulse of former ages had died away and the monks were no longer famous for strict adhesion to their rule The ordinary monk lived luxuriously by the standards of that age dressed smartly and was fond of good food The former restrictions

on his meat diet had been relaxed He was fond of field sports – but so were other men It was not the sinfulness but the uselessness of the monk on which the world commented most The worst that Langland could say of him was that when outside the cloister he appeared as –

> A rider, a roamer by streets
> A leader of lovedays [manor-court sittings] and a land buyer
> A pricker on a palfrey from manor to manor,
> An heap of hounds at his arse as he a lord were [1]

And the poet looks forward to a day which indeed came in the fullness of time

> Then shall the abbot of Abingdon and all his issue for ever
> Have a knock of a King and incurable the wound

Already it was to the kingly power that Church reformers, baffled by Pope and bishops were beginning to turn their hopes Parliament was already demanding a large disendowment of the Church which had swallowed so much land from countless generations of benefactors and gave not an acre back. But the time had not yet quite come when the general conscience considered that lay power could dispose of the sacred endowments of the Church The omnicompetence of the King in Parliament was not yet an established constitutional doctrine The parallel authorities of Church and State of Convocation and Parliament still represented the actual balance of society

In one great branch of service to mankind the Church in the age of Chaucer was neither decadent nor even stagnant The continuous but ever moving tradition of ecclesiastical architecture still proceeded on its majestic way filling England with

1 Langland's criticism of the monk's life was not like much modern criticism including Wyclif's due to want of appreciation of the retired contemplative life of self abnegation but to Langland's perception that the monks had ceased to realize that ideal The Middle Ages had no do he h he [illegible]
he [illegible]
be [illegible]
re [illegible]
G [illegible] s Hum's *Unconquerable Mind* 1930

towering forests of masonry of which the beauty and grandeur have never been rivalled by either the Ancients or the Moderns. With a brief pause in building caused by the Black Death, the march of English architecture in cathedral, abbey, and parish church went forwards through the Decorated and the Flamboyant to the Perpendicular, the chief new feature being the elaboration of tracery, and the size of the great windows each with its framework of stone shafts [80–82] Archdeacons on their visitations would condemn a little old Norman church, perfect in its own way, as 'too small and too dark' In the newer churches the light no longer crept but flooded in, through the stained glass of incomparable beauty and richness of colour No doubt the medieval Church became too wealthy, no doubt her rival chiefs and corporations suffered from the sins of pride and luxury and narrow *esprit de corps*, but if the Church had been as St Francis or as Wyclif wished, a poor, devoted evangelist, those cathedrals and minsters would never have been built in such supreme magnificence, to stand, century after century silently praising God, giving to one generation of men after another the purest and highest delight of worship that can be kindled through the eye

The section of the medieval Church that was under least discipline and had only too little corporate sense was the army of unbeneficed priests deacons and clerks in holy orders who were scattered about the country in every variety of employment, often under no control beyond that of their lay employers In most cases they fulfilled functions performed in the modern world by laymen They were the 'clerks' (in both senses of the word) who wrote papers and kept accounts for men of affairs whether merchants landowners, or officials Others fulfilled sacred functions as private chaplains in castle or manor-house or as 'chantry priests' paid by laymen to say masses for the souls of departed relations Many drifted about from one job to another forming lazy and criminal habits that made them in the end unemployable for any good purpose

The clerks in business houses and legal or State offices were performing functions necessary for society, and were neither better nor worse men than their neighbours But in

80 Towering forests of masonry ... Cathed



hospitals guilds or chantries the masters whom these authorities appointed were secular clergy Clever boys of humble origin rose through such schools to be clerks and priests for the Church was still the career of ambition most easily open to the poor But no attempt was made to teach reading and writing to the mass of the people until the eighteenth century brought the charity schools

In 1382 William of Wykeham [83] desiring better education for the secular clergy founded at Winchester a grammar school on a scale of unexampled magnificence which became the model for later foundations of equal splendour like Eton A certain proportion of the scholars were to be sons of noble and powerful (*valentium*) persons a provision which the historian of our medieval schools has called the germ of the public school system [84]

The two ancient universities of England already existed, but scarcely yet as rivals for Cambridge only rose to national importance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

In Chaucer s day Oxford was the intellectual centre of England and Wyclif s influence was the chief fact in Oxford until he and his followers were driven out or silenced by the interference of bishops and King with the independent life of the University (1382) If Oxford had been united the invasion of her liberties would have been more difficult But there had long been two academic parties the secular and the regular clergy the former took Wyclif s side while the latter turned against him

The regulars were the monks and friars who had several great convents of their orders attached to the University In the previous century the friars had been the leaders of academic thought with their Grossetete Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus and they were still a great power in Oxford

The seculars who regarded themselves as the University proper consisted of secular clergy priests like Wyclif or deacons and clerks in lower orders These men were academicians first and churchmen second They were as jealous for the liberties of their University as a burgher for those of his town They were always on guard against papal and episcopal

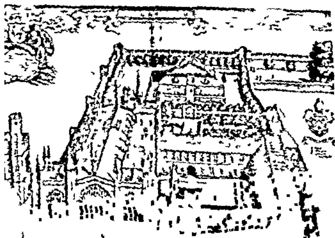
1 A F Leach *Winchester College* p 96

William of Wykeham had already founded his magnificent New College, with its quadrangular buildings and its 'hundred clerks' With such a pattern to copy, the English college system grew apace with ever new foundations during the next two centuries [85]

The demand for colleges and the readiness of founders to supply the need were stimulated by religious controversy The orthodox desired to place the boys, who were to be the clergy of the next generation in the safe keeping of such institutions and masters as would preserve them from the Wyclif heresy, which raged in the lodging houses and inns where the students lived crowded together, discussing all things in heaven and earth with the freedom of irresponsible and ardent youth And, apart from all questions of divinity, parents and practical men saw the advantage of academic homes to shelter the young from material and moral dangers possibly as bad as the intellectual errors of Wyclif The college system struck root in England and flourished as nowhere else The business management of the college revenues at this period seems to have been more often efficient than the management of monastic finance

And so in the fifteenth century while the forcible suppression of debate on religious and ecclesiastical questions crippled for a hundred years the intellectual vigour of the English

85 New College Oxford



universities, the rapid growth of the college system brought about an improvement in morals and discipline, and a civilizing of academic life, for which later generations of Englishmen stand deeply in debt to the Oxford and Cambridge of the late medieval period

One very important branch of learning had found for itself a home that was neither Oxford nor Cambridge The lay lawyers, who were building up the common law administered in the King's Courts, had formed for themselves the Inns of Court between London and Westminster, where legal education, other than that of the ecclesiastical courts, was carried on Maitland has thus described them

> They were associations of lawyers which had about them a good deal of the club, something of the College, something of the trade union They acquired the *inns* or *hospices* – that is, the town houses – which had belonged to great noblemen for example, the Earl of Lincoln s inn The house and church of the Knights of the Temple came into their hands The serjeants and apprentices who composed the inns of court enjoyed an exclusive right of pleading in court [1]

These common lawyers were, as a class, the first learned laymen, and as such were of great importance to the growth of the nation

1 *Collected Papers*, 11, p 482

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING FOR CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO

H S Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, 1150 1400*, Eileen Power, *Medieval English Wool Trade*, Trevelyan *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, E Lipson, *Economic History of England*, vol 1, *Social England* (edited by Traill), vol 11 Prof Postan *The Chronology of Labour Services*, in *R H S* 1937 G R Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England*, B L Manning *The People s Faith in the Time of Wyclif*, Coulton, *Chaucer and his England*, Chaucer s *Canterbury Tales* and Langland s *Piers Plowman*, ed Skeat *Medieval England*, edited by H W C Davis, 1924, Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, A F Leach, *The Schools of Medieval England*, and review of it by A G Little in the *Economic History Review* 1915, pp 525–9 For the Church a hundred years before, see *Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century*, J R Moorman, 1945

CHAPTER THREE

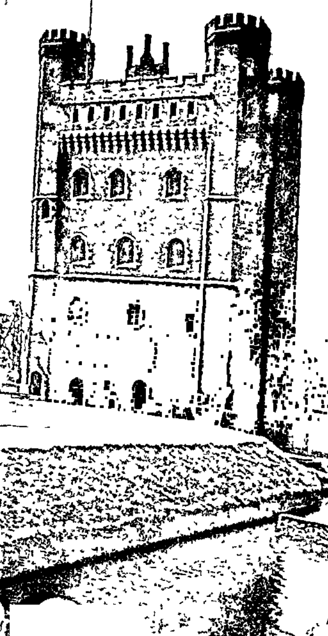
ENGLAND IN THE AGE OF CAXTON

HENRY VI, 1422 – EDWARD IV, 1461 – EDWARD V, 1483 – RICHARD III, 1483 – HENRY VII 1485

It is difficult for us today to imagine how slow was the pace of change before the era of inventions After the social and intellectual unrest of the English fourteenth century, it might have been expected that something big and dramatic would soon occur Yet the fifteenth century proved markedly conservative in most aspects of life and thought

If Chaucer in the ghost had haunted England during the lifetime of Caxton (1422–91) he would have found little to astonish him, except perhaps that nothing had come of all the talk against the Church As he rode along the familiarly bad highways still dangerously beset by robbers, and crossed the deep fords and ill mended bridges he would see the peasants with their oxen cultivating the same strips in the big open fields and only if he attended the manor court would he learn that very few of them were any longer serfs The wayfarers who accosted him would still be the types he knew so well – pilgrims as many and as jolly as those with whom he had ridden to Canterbury [86] friars summoners, and pardoners still at their old games with simple folk, merchants guarding their pack horse trains gentry and churchmen with hawk and hound lords retainers with bow and spear bound on the same dubious errands as when John of Gaunt s men held the countryside in awe From their talk of Red and White Roses and battles fought on English soil, he might surmise that disorder was even worse than it had been in his own day, but the nature and cause of misrule was the same the terrorizing of









89 Queens College, Cambridge

by se
some

In … gentleman s manor-house, … give ear [90] the King s Court, the poet s ghost would find the culture he loved still alive in a faded kind of way It was good that they should still be reading his poems, but his successors did not seem to do much except imitate with indifferent success The imagination of youth *still* seemed prisoner to the formal allegories of medieval love-longing and its conventional discipline, and still delighted in the war of the Greek knights against Troy – as interminable as the English war against

like St Albans, Towton, Barnet, and Bosworth Field[1] The verdict of such a battle, even if fought far away in Yorkshire or in the Midlands, was usually accepted without more ado by

the Long Parliament, when numerous and enthusi[illegible] were maintained by system[illegible] to make regular campai[illegible] and castles and manor[illegible] the Lords of the Roses had no such hold over their countrymen since they could make no appeal to any principle or to any popular sentiment on behalf of rival pretensions to the Crown, neither side could venture to antagonize opinion by heavy war taxation, by the interruption of trade or the devastation of the countryside, according to the recent and evil example of our armies in France In this sense it is true that the Wars of the Roses' were, militarily speaking, only a skin eruption on the surface of English life

But if by the Wars of the Roses we mean a period of social disorder which gave rise at intervals to spurts of real warfare, it is clear that the whole social fabric was affected by the general state of misrule So deep and so widespread was the damage done by overgreat subjects and lack of governance', that in the succeeding century the Tudor monarchy was popular because it was strong and could bridle stout noblemen and gentlemen'

In what did this social disorder consist? It was a rural phenomenon not much affecting the towns But the population of England was nine tenths rural and the social disorder was mainly a struggle of landowners among one another for land

Most men s conduct is determined by the prevailing fashion of the society in which each lives Just as in the eighteenth cen-[illegible]

1 These battles were still fought with the same infantry tactics as Crecy and Agincourt by archers shooting arrows and knights and men at arms dismounted to fight by the archers side But cannon were now occasionally used in the field with effect.



The relation of the landlord to the tenant – whether of open-field strips or of an enclosed farm – was assimilating itself year by year to modern practice Feudalism proper and serfdom were dying out But the quasi feudal position of the landlord still survived in his powerful chairmanship of the manor court or court leet exercised by himself in person or by his steward There the affairs of lord of the manor and his copyhold tenants were decided and registered, as well as the internal relations of the community of farmers of the open field and sharers of the common pasture and waste It might not always be possible in practice for the tenants to override the will of the lord or his steward but the tenants were judges in the court, and the procedure of an open court guided by the traditional custom of the manor was a real check on landlord tyranny, as well as an exercise in self government for all, in which the poorest he might take his part

Disputes between landlord and tenant as to the obligation to do repairs and as to the amount and regularity of rent payments characterized this period of transition from the old feudal ways to a new leasehold money system of which the rules had not yet been regularized by tradition Landed proprietors as their correspondence shows were kept busy over these controversies and their agents, lay and clerical had no easy task with a recalcitrant peasantry James Gloys, the Pastons chaplain and factotum who acted as tutor to their sons and as confidential secretary and land-agent, distrained and threatened to distrain cattle and ploughs But he too was human one tenant he declared he could never touch I could never do it unless I would have distrained him in his mother s house and this I durst not for her cursing

The functions of land agent were often performed by a gentleman s private chaplain or even by the parish priest who

and Devon Henry VI paid Adam Moleyns Privy Seal and Bishop of Chichester £1 000 to cancel a patent that had authorized him to ship wool where he pleased (Ramsay *York and Lancaster*, II p 79) This Moleyns was a characteristic figure of that epoch Clerk of the Council and a politician useful to the great men he was rewarded for his services to the State with the Bishopric of Chichester and licence to impark 12 000 acres and to fortify twelve manor houses

visited his flock in this secular capacity. Such mundane employment by the patron of the living must often have involved the parson in questionable proceedings.[1] The use of the beneficed clergy by the laity for their own secular purposes, deriving from a past age when only the clergy could read and write, still prevailed from top to bottom of society. For did not the saintly King Henry VI pay his civil servants with bishoprics and other Church preferment? How else indeed could he pay them in a land whose people would not endure taxation?

Sometimes the parish priest spent most of his time as a farmer, cultivating his own glebe farm (normally forty to sixty acres of the open field) like the peasant born that he was, and even hiring other lands. Parson Trulliber, the agricultural enthusiast in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, was a survival from medieval custom.

Very occasionally the open field was enclosed and divided up into consolidated farms by agreement among the peasant cultivators themselves. And always there was a free land market among the customary tenants. The thrifty peasant of fifteenth-century England, like the peasant of nineteenth-century France, often saved up money to enlarge his little holding by purchase of his neighbours' strips.

Taken as a whole, the fifteenth century was a good time for the peasant and labourer and a bad time for the landlord. Owing to the continual recurrence of plague, the shortage of the population had not yet been made up since the Black Death, and the decay of serfdom enabled the labourer to take full advantage of this fact by putting a high price on his free service. Not only did the landlord find it very expensive to work his demesne land by hiring labour, but he found it equally difficult to let farms, whether on the demesne or in the open field of the village. The land hunger of the thirteenth century

1 The relation of the parson, Sir Oliver Oates, to his master, Sir Daniel Brackley, in Stevenson's *Black Arrow*, is, like most other social facts in the book, taken from a close study of the *Paston Letters*, in spite of the fact that R. L. S. does not seem to have known the difference between a friar and a monk. Another illuminating and more learned study of fifteenth-century thought and social practice is to be found in Mr Evan John's *Crippled Splendour* (1938).

The recurrence of plague was most frequent in the towns and ports, where the flea-bearing rats multiplied most, that is to say, the part of the community where wealth was chiefly made was the part most often disorganized and reduced by epidemics For these reasons the total national income was less than in Chaucer's day, but it was more evenly distributed The general economic situation was favourable to the peasant and the poor [1]

This period of rural society is best known to us from the letters of the Paston family and other smaller collections, like the Stonor and Cely Papers The fifteenth century was the first in which the upper classes of both sexes, and their agents, lay as well as clerical customarily wrote letters – in English tongue it is to be observed The times might be out of joint, but education had clearly made great strides since the time when kings and barons had set their seals and inked their crosses to documents they had not the skill to read

In the age of Caxton, letters were not written for pastime or gossip, but had some practical purpose in view, usually of law,

[illegible] but is [illegible] article [illegible] May 19[illegible]

Of the 450 odd manors for which the fifteenth-century accounts ha[illegible]

See also the article by Mr John Saltmarsh entitled 'Plague and economic decline in England in the later Middle Ages' in the *Cambridge Historical Journal* for 1941

knight to his lady, sung in strains of rapture and in forms of mystic allegory [92, 93] Such indeed was literature as known to the Pastons and their neighbours But this poetry of love, from its most heavenly flight in Dante's chaste worship of another man s wife, to the more usual idealization of courtly adultery had seldom anything to do with marriage

To the educated medieval man and woman, marriage was one relation of life love another Love might indeed chance to grow out of marriage, as doubtless it often did If it did not, the wife tried to assert her rights by her tongue, sometimes with success But the lordship was held to be vested in the husband and when he asserted it by fist and stick he was seldom blamed by public opinion In this unequal struggle, the woman also laboured under the handicap of constantly bearing children – most of whom soon died and had to be replaced Such marriage was not an ideal state of things, but

92 The garden



for centuries it served to people England, a difficult task in those days of plague and medical ignorance

A nobler view of what marriage might and should mean had not yet been envisaged by general opinion Even the Church had scarcely been helpful, for her ascetic ideal was unsuited to average human nature The Fathers had regarded women with suspicion as potential snares of Satan The Church had indeed endeavoured to protect them by her authority from lawless lust and violence and her support of the marriage tie had at least made it more difficult for a man to discard his wife – though divorce was sometimes obtained for money But ecclesiastical authority which insisted that priests must be celibate, regarded marriage as a lower state In this imperfect world the laity must be permitted to marry, but the relation of man and wife was not held to touch a high spiritual plane It was not therefore wonderful that the clergy sanctioned by their ceremonials the customs of child betrothal and child marriage, thereby accepting the materialistic view of the laity, that the rational choice of the parties most concerned was not necessary and that the marriage of a boy and girl might be a proper subject for barter between other persons [1]

Since therefore love was not the normal basis of marriage he Troubadours of Languedoc at the end of the eleventh century and the French and English poets who succeeded them in chanting the service of a pagan God of Love regarded the passion of love as being under no obligation to respect so irrelevant a thing as the marriage bond It has been shrewdly said that any idealization of sexual love in a society where marriage is purely utilitarian must begin by being an idealization of adultery But it need not so end [2]

The great gift of the medieval poets of the Western world was this new conception of the love of man and woman as a

1 The degree to which the Church tried to limit and in fact allowed child marriage s discussed in Coulton s *Chaucer and his England* pp 204 8 ed 1921

2 It was said that a Court of Love had pronounced that married persons could not be in love with one another I would refer the reader to a very remarkable and scholarly book on the whole subject – *The Allegory of Love* a study in medieval tradition by C S Lewis of Magdalen College Oxford 1936



unknown warriors and martyrs No doubt there were many cases of lovers marrying, all through the Middle Ages Men did not always obey their fathers, and fathers were sometimes human, and often died young Chaucer s *Franklin's Tale* is a beautiful story of a marriage made and maintained by love And in the fifteenth century things were slowly moving The poet-King James I of Scotland, made his love his Queen, and wrote *The Kingis quair* in her honour

Even in the society of the prosaic Pastons we have epistolary record of at least two love marriages In the first case, that of Margery Brews and John Paston in 1477, the girl won over her soft-hearted mother to the romantic view Here, in the original spelling is Margery s love letter to John while the matter was still being negotiated, not very hopefully, on the usual purely financial ground

> Right reverent and wurschypfull, and my ryght welebeloved Voluntyne [Valentine]
>
> My lady my moder hath labored the mat[t]er to my ffadur full delygently but she can no mor gete [namely she can get no more dowry provided with me] than ye knowe of, for the wheche God knowythe I am full sory But yf that ye loffe [love] me, as I tryste verely that ye do ye will not leffe [leave] me therefor

Her next letter on the same situation, though not very grammatical, is as moving as anything in English prose (I give it in modernized spelling)

> Wherefore, if ye could be content with that good [namely, that amount of dowry] and my poor person, I would be the merriest maiden on ground And if ye think not yourself so satisfied, or that ye might have much more good as I have understood by you before good true and loving Valentine that ye take no such labour upon you as to come [any] more for that matter but let it pass and never more be spoken of as I may be your true lover and bede-woman during my life [namely pray for you the rest of my life]

This was too much for John He was more his own master than many young men, for his father was dead, and he put the matter through in spite of the doubts of his mother and relations

The other Paston love story had a longer and rougher course but reached an equally happy haven Margery Paston had the

spiritual thing – the best of all spiritual things, raising men and women above their normal selves in all gentleness and virtue

> The God of love, a benedicite!
> How mighty and how great a lord is he!
> For he can make of low hertes high,
> And of high low, and like for to die,
> And hard hertes he can maken free
>
> And thereof cometh all goodnesse,
> All honour and all gentilnesse,
> Worship, ease and all hertes lust,
> Parfit joy and ful assured trust,
> Jolitee, pleasaunce and freshnesse,
> Lowlihead, largesse and curtesye,
> Semlihead and true companie
> Drede of shame for to doon amis
> For he that trewly love s servaunt is
> Were lother be shamed than to die![1]

Here was a new and constant source of inspiration to the life of mankind based on the facts of nature It was an idea unknown to the Ancients,[2] and unknown to the early Church Could this thrice precious concept of the medieval poets be allied, by a further revolution, to the state of marriage? Could the lovers themselves become husband and wife? Could the bond of young love be prolonged till age and death? This change has actually taken place in England in the gradual evolution of the idea and practice of marriage It was not an inevitable change In France, for instance, the arranged marriage is still normal though of course the civilized French parent pays far greater consideration to the wishes and mutual compatibility of the young people than did Mistress Agnes Paston *And such marriages are often very happy But in England the arranged marriage has given place to the love* match, the parents have yielded to the children the choice of their own destiny The battle of Gretna Green has been won

This victory of freedom and love has behind it a long roll of

1 Sir Thomas Clanvowe, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, time of Henry IV, formerly attributed to Chaucer

2 There is a very shrewd analysis of marriage and love in the Graeco-Roman world in John Buchan s *Augustus*, p 244

¶ To pay at the fery for a man and his harnes . . .
¶ Item a boye . . .

Ye right or wrong, these men among on women do compl[aine]
Affermyng this . . .
Peticie a[. . .]
Perþ[. . .]
Labouren [. . .]

Thatt . . .
Which . . .
Reseme . . .

That . . . ene vs, lete vs discusse, what was all the maner,
Betwene them too we wyl also, tell all the . . .
That she was in, now I . . .
. . . tre

Therfo[. . .]
Fyne [. . .]
For in [. . .]

. . . is do, wherfore moch harme shal growe
My destenys is for to dey, a shamful deth I trowe
Or ellis to flee, the ton must bee, none other wey I knowe,
But to withdrawe, as an outlaw, and take me to my bowe.

34 The Ballad of the Nut-Brown Maid

courage secretly to plight herself to Richard Calle the bailiff of the Paston estates Such betrothals were regarded as binding and the Church could not refuse to maintain them, but they were sometimes broken by the consent of the parties For years the girl stood out against the fury and bullying of her family till at last wearied out by her obstinacy and still desiring to retain the indispensable services of their too aspiring bailiff the Pastons allowed the lovers to complete their marriage

Already in the popular ballad literature of the later fifteenth century the motif of the love marriage was more and more making itself heard as in the *Nut Brown Maid* [94] ancestress of the *Bailiff s Daughter of Islington* and a hundred other romantically married heroines of ballad When we reach the age of Shakespeare literature and the drama treat mutual love as the prope

basis of marriage The

for matrimonial freedor

popular imagination and the commonest interest on the Elizabethan stage is the devotion of lovers aiming at marriage and the adventures of runaway couples like Master Fenton and Anne Page Clearly the love marriage was more frequent by the end of the Tudor period but child marriages were still all too common in this matter the reformed Church was at first as much in fault as the medieval In 1582 Bishop Chaderton married off his only daughter Joan aged nine to a boy of eleven the result was bad On another occasion John Rigmarden aged three was carried in the arms of a clergyman who coaxed him to repeat the words of matrimony to a bride of five Before the end he struggled to get down saying he would learn no more that day but the parson said You must speak a little more and then go play you

And so the slow and long contested evolution towards the English love match goes on throughout our social history until in the age of Jane Austen and the Victorians free choice in love is accepted as the basis of marriage even in the best society and any more mercenary arrangement is regarded as exceptional and suspect The lawless and pagan God of Love, whose altar the medieval poets had erected has been baptized

1 Early English Text Society 1897 *Child Marriages etc* p xxii



London, for even Norwich failed to supply such overseas goods as would now be found in the shops of any small market town As to home produce, the preparation curing, and storing of the meal meat, and game off the estate and the fish from the ponds, besides the command of the dairy the brew ho...

... of the manor house was spun and woven cut out and made up in the house or the neighbourhood under the lady s orders Her daughters did not go to town to buy their dresses, though one might hope to have the stuff for one s best dress fetched from London The young men as brightly and fancifully clothed as their sisters ... liberty to tr...

Thu...

of a w...

round ...

The walls of manor house rooms in this period were hung with cloth the hall and better chambers with the rich cloth of Arras tapestries today of museum value representing hunting scenes or religious or allegorical subjects [41 97] the commoner rooms with woven hangings either of one bright colour or of variegated stripes Framed pictures had ... in the Engl...

painter...

College ... glish artist William Baker, between 1479 and 1488, there must have been much fine painting on walls in the England of the Wars of the Roses — almost all perished long ago [98]

Chimneys in the wall were more and more replacing the open hearth in the middle of the room whence the smoke had escaped as best it could through open windows The Pastons were making this great improvement in their manor houses as early as the reign of Henry VI but the change was gradual for as late as the reign of Elizabeth William Harrison remembered and regretted the old system

> Now have we manie chimnies and yet our tenderlings complaine of rheumes catarhs, and poses Then had we none

London, for even N

as would

As to hor

meal, meat, and game off the estate ... , and storing of the besides the command of the dairy, the ...

... cut out and made up in the house or the neighbourhood ... manor-house was spun and under the lady's orders Her daughters did not go to town to buy their dresses, though one might hope to have the stuff for one's best dress fetched from London The young men, as brightly and fancifully clothed as their sisters, having more liberty to travel, could more often deal with a city tailor [95, 96]

Thus we can imagine the innumerable and constant activities of a wealthy matron, and *mutatis mutandis* the housewife's round of work in all ranks of life

The walls of manor-house rooms in this period were hung with cloth the hall and better chambers with the rich 'cloth of Arras', tapestries today of museum value, representing hunting scenes or religious or allegorical subjects [41, 97], the commoner rooms with woven hangings either of one bright colour or of variegated stripes Framed pictures had as yet no place in the English mansion, but the walls themselves were often painted To judge by what is left of the mural painting in Eton College Chapel, done by an English artist, William Baker, between 1479 and 1488, there must have been much fine painting on walls in the England of the Wars of the Roses – almost all perished long ago [98]

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in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries [101, 102] Whatever they may have been in theory, or in the distant past, they were not in this era refuges for the poor, or houses for women with a special call to the religious life The records of the frequent episcopal visitations show that there was a good deal of female human nature in the nunneries, and that discipline was relaxed, though scandal was only occasional The nun and particularly the lady abbess or prioress, seldom forgot that she was a lady born and bred Like Chaucer s Madam Eglentyne, she was a model of fashion and deportment rather than of devotion

The rules for dress and conduct drawn up long ago by founders with ascetic ideas were very generally neglected 'for more than six weary centuries the bishops waged a holy war against fashion in the cloister and in vain The episcopal visitor was often deafened by a flood of shrill female eloquence, the prioress complaining of the nuns, and all the dozen nuns together accusing the prioress, till the good man fled before the storm, having effected little by his visitation In vain the bishops attempted to dislodge the regiments of hunting dogs and other hounds and sometimes the monkeys[1] – with which, contrary to rule, the poor ladies solaced their long leisure At one nunnery in the Lincoln diocese when the bishop came and deposited a copy of the Bull in the house and ordered the nuns to obey it they ran after him to the gate and threw the Bull at his head screaming that they never would observe it

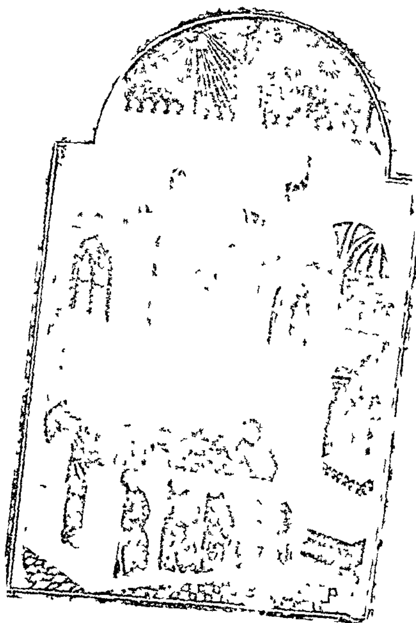
The nunneries though numerous were very small Of the one hundred and eleven Houses in England only four had over thirty inmates The total number of nuns in the country was

1 We know how the nuns monkeys reached this island The author of the *Libel of English Policy* (1436) complained that

> The grete galees of Venees and Florence
> Be well ladene wythe thynges of complacence,
> All spicerye and other grocers ware
> With swete wynes all manere of chaffare
> Apes and jades and marmusettes taylede,
> *Nifles trifles that litell have availed

in return for which they take away our good cloth





the architectural fo— r
church with th
was a separate
down to posterity the founder s name ... urch or chapel carrying
man s memory may outlive his life half a year but by r lady There s hope a great
he must build churches then or else shall he suffer not
thinking on [103 5]

The fifteenth century for all its troubles was a great time for increased educational facilities and endowments There had been many schools in Chaucer s England but there were many more on the eve of the Reformation The fifteenth-century bishops often worldly wise men of a good type loved to endow schools Municipal guilds and individual burghers and merchants increasing in wealth and in family connexions with

103 John Rous chantry priest of Guy s Cl ff near Warwick compil ng the Warw ck Roll



between 1,500 and 2,000 But of course each nunnery had also servants attached and one or more priests

In the fifteenth century these establishments were going downhill financially and otherwise Before Henry VIII took the matter so drastically in hand, eight nunneries had been suppressed in the course of forty years at the instigation of orthodox bishops For example, Bishop Alcock of Ely in 1496 founded Jesus College, Cambridge in place of St Radegund s nunnery, of which he procured the dissolution on the ground of the negligence and improvidence and dissolute disposition and incontinence of the religious women of the same house by reason of the vicinity of Cambridge University The successors of those two Cambridge scholars who visited the Trumpington Mill in Chaucer s day had apparently been paying too much attention to the nuns of St Radegund At the very end there were only two nuns left one an absentee and the other an infant So at least said the Bishop, anxious to clear the ground for a more useful institution

St Radegund s was an exceptionally bad case, but it remains true that the nunneries of England were less useful and admirable houses of religion in the later Middle Ages than they are today [1]

Between the time of Wyclif s criticism on the great endowments of the Church and the onslaught of Henry VIII, gifts of land and money were still commonly made but they now went less often to houses of monks nuns and friars than [illegible] s and schools In these latter [illegible]

[illegible] ...tion Church

[illegible] ...school was in the fifteenth century as useful for the education of laymen as of priests And the foundation of a chantry was largely a self regarding act in a chantry, one or more priests were paid to say mass for the soul of the founder. And whatever one s expectations about the next world, it was clearly a way of endowing a living monument to one s own memory here below A chantry often took

1 The authoritative works which I have quoted on the subject are Eileen Power s *Medieval English Nunneries* and her chapter on Madame Eglentyne' in *Medieval People*

the architectural form of a delicately wrought side-chapel in a church, with the founder s tomb large therein, sometimes it was a separate building a small church or chapel carrying down to posterity the founder s name There s hope a great man s memory may outlive his life half a year but by r lady he must build churches then or else shall he suffer not thinking on [103 5]

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103 John Rous, chantry priest of Guy s Cliff near Warwick compiling the Warwick Roll





106 At school

than bad in its results Some sat in the grammar schools conning Latin cheek by jowl with the ablest sons of burghers and yeomen Others went to smaller private schools even then sometimes kept by a married master [1] Others again were

1 *Stonor Letters* 1 p 21

class of scholarly laymen and scholarly priests, for both had their part in the great movements that shortly took place Grammar schools were not, as used to be thought, the result of the English Reformation they were its cause

Before the Greek and Ciceronian Renaissance reached our island at the end of the fifteenth century, secondary education, from aristocratic Winchester and Eton downwards was based on the teaching of Latin – Virgil, Ovid, and some Christian authors The medieval Church had long ago acquired a liberal reverence for the ancient writers in spite of their pagan errors and out of the liberality grew much that was finest in European civilization Boys in the grammar schools wrote Latin verse and prose compositions, and stood up in class to translate the Latin authors into English, already the universal medium of instruction, only in some schools French was used alternatively, not because it was any longer spoken by the boys at home, but on the contrary lest the French tongue be wholly lost But out of school hours no language must be talked except Latin! For some centuries to come this amazing rule was sanctioned by the usual brutalities of flogging Sometimes a lupus or spy was [illegible] em used [illegible] did this [illegible] a dead language and more a real medium of speech to the grammar-school boy of the fifteenth century than to the public-school boy of the nineteenth? There are many reasons to suppose that it was Familiarity with Latin such as the grammar schools set out to supply was indeed essential in those days to any professional career It was not merely the priest who needed it, it was required also by the diplomat the lawyer the civil servant, the physician, the merchant s accountant the town clerk, in many of the documents connected with their daily work

The sons of the nobility and gentry were educated in various ways, differing according to the rank or the personal views of their parents Some stayed in the manor house and were taught letters by the chaplain, field sports by the forester and the use of arms by an old retainer or a neighbour knight [106–9] More usually they were sent away from home an English practice that seemed heartless to foreigners, but was perhaps more good



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from the manor house the counting house, the grammar school and the university were coming up To them the new age was destined to belong Many of the gentlemen s sons who did best in after life were those who had been apprenticed to craftsmen and merchants a custom which increasingly



107 Field sports

boarded in monasteries under the special care of the abbot[1] At some time between the ages of fourteen and eighteen they might go on to Oxford or Cambridge while others completed their education as henchmen or squires at the King's Court, or in the Court-like households of great noblemen There the acquirements most valued were not Latin, but skill in riding, jousting at tournaments field sports, dancing, harping, piping, and singing and doubtless all the forms of love making Moralists denounced these establishments as the ruin of the youth trained in them No doubt some were better than others, but the noblemen as a class and their retinues were going downhill at the latter end of the fifteenth century and the men

1 Shortly before the Dissolution the Abbot of Reading writes to Lord Lisle, *I have set your young gentleman with William Edwards my under-steward, that he may be well seen to by a woman for his dressing, for he is too young to shift for himself He is the most forwardly child in learning that I have known* (G. Baskerville *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries*, p 37)

hools where the sons of the gentry were educated Winchester om the first had a contingent of this class, and from the first as a national not merely local grammar school, it drew boys rom all over the south, the Midlands, and even from Cheshire nd Lancashire Many of the scholars stayed till the age of ighteen Eton was in great financial difficulties during the Wars of the Roses But this, says Mr Leach,

perhaps hastened rather than retarded the development of the school into a great public school for the upper classes and the aristocracy who while paying nothing for their education paid large sums for boarding in the houses of the fellows and in the town of Eton whence they came to be called Oppidans [1]

And so in 1477 young William Paston was sent from the Norfolk manor house to Fton to learn Latin translation and composition in verse and prose, and to consort with other

should multiply many times to get the modern equivalent

I advise you to think once of the dav [every day] of your father s counsel to learn the law for he said many times that whosoever should dwell at Paston should need to conne [know how to] defend himself

John s son Walter Paston was sent to the more distant Oxford under charge of the family chaplain and man-of all-works James Gloys His mother Margaret was anxious lest the clerks of the University should persuade him to take Holy Orders I would love him better to be a good secular man than a lewit [unworthy] priest

While Walter Paston was at Oxford in 1474 he must have seen the walls of Magdalen the college founded by Bishop

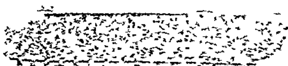
1 Leach *Schools of Medieval England* p 239



fame, it was still suspect of heresy in the minds of pious parents choosing a university. Partly for this reason, the number of Oxford students fell, and the number of Cambridge students rose during the next hundred years, and royal patronage was turned to the foundation of colleges on the banks of the hitherto neglected Cam. By the end of the century a high proportion of bishops were Cambridge men. But though the younger university was rising fast in numbers, wealth, and importance as a place of education, neither Cambridge nor Oxford added much to scholarship or thought until the coming of the New Learning in the first years of the Tudor Kings. Speculation and scholarship had to be orthodox, and orthodoxy was no longer mentally creative, as in the days of the great medieval schoolmen.

But during this conservative age the college system took firm root, and thereby an end was put in England to the uncared-for and undisciplined life of the medieval student. It is the tendency of all movements to go too far in the first flush of

111 Magdalen College, Oxford: the [illegible]



another at Guildhall Of lighter literature there was little except ballads and they were more often recited or chanted than written and read The eternal human appetite for stories was *for the most part satisfied* by word of mouth. To kill the long hours, men and women still practised the social art of story telling besides music on all sorts of instruments and singing of songs

Such was the state of society and letters when Caxton set up his printing press in England

William Caxton (1422–91) was a product of the new middle

his own hobbies with business capacity and trained zeal As a successful merchant of the London Mercers Company he made enough money during his thirty years residence in the Low Countries to be able to devote his later years to the literary pursuits he loved He began by translating French books into English While so engaged he fell in with the new mystery of printing with movable types and studied it at Bruges and Cologne In 1474 5 he produced abroad two of his own translations (one of them a medieval romance and the other *The Game and Playe of Chesse*) the first books to be printed in our language [114 16]

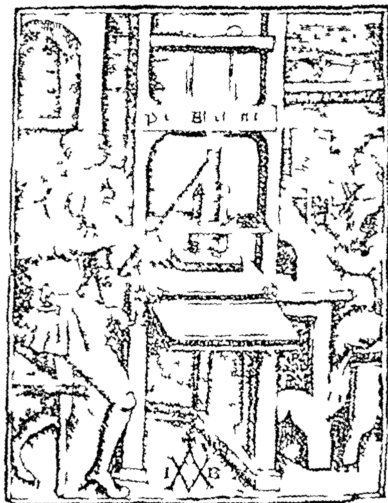
114 The Merchant Adventurers House where Caxton lived in Bruges



116 A German printing press (1568)

prodigious Besides his constant and arduous labours at the press he translated as many as twenty books He had indeed a [illegible]

[illegible] the foundations of literary English and to prepare the way for the great triumphs of our language in the following century


I B

lande for to refresh
a mercer, car
he axyed afte ... answerde, that she coude speke no frenshe And the marchaunt was angry, for he also coude speke no frenshe but wolde haue hadde egges and she vnderstode hym not And theene at laste another sayd that he wolde haue eyren then the good wyf sayd that she vnderstod hym wel Loo, what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte, egges or eyren ?
Cert
anc
ben ... e moste curyous termes that ... ytoue And thus between playn rude and curyous, I stand abasshed but in my judgemente the comyn termes that be dayli vsed ben lyghter to be vnderstonde than the olde and auncyent englysshe And for as moche as this present Booke is not for a rude vplondyssh man to laboure therein ne rede it, but onely for a clerke and a noble gentylman that feleth and vnderstondeth in faytes of armes, in loue and in noble chyualrye, therefor in a meane bytwene bothe I haue reduced and translated this sayd booke in to our englysshe not ouer rude ne curyous but in suche termes as shall be vnderstanden, by goddys grace accordynge to my copye

We thus see that Caxton had a choice to make He had no dictionaries to cramp or to guide him As he sat in his book-littered study considering the matter, he had not, as we have and as even Shakespeare had an English language 'given whose limits he might extend but whose framework he must accept The number of dialects were almost as numerous as the counties of England and moreover they were perpetually changing The northerner the west country man, even the housewife of Kent with her eyren , could not easily understand either the London merchant or one another The victory of the speech of London and the Court may perhaps have been ultimately inevitable but it was rendered certain and rapid first by Chaucer and his fifteenth-century imitators who drove the west midland dialect of *Piers Plowman* out of the field among the
press
Book ... the printing press,

His own use of the machine which he established as part of our island life was at once ideal and practical, but it was not controversial Yet the press would henceforth be the weapon of every political or religious controversy, the tempo of the spread of ideas and of knowledge would be immensely accelerated But in the year Caxton died that consequence had scarcely yet been realized

On the other hand, Caxton was well aware of the importance of his work in fixing the form of the English language for educated people and he therefore gave much thought and asked much advice as to the dialect into which he had best translate the books he printed He described these difficulties in his Prologue to the *Eneydos*,[1] his translation from a French paraphrase of Virgil s *Aeneid*

After dyuerse werkes made translated and achieued hauing noo werke in hande, I, sittyng in my studye where as laye many dyuerse paunflettis and bookys happened that to my hande came a lytyl booke *in* frenshe *whiche late was* translated oute of latyn by some *noble* clerke *of fraunce whiche* booke is named *Eneydos* made *in* latyn by *that noble poete* and grete clerke Vyrgyle

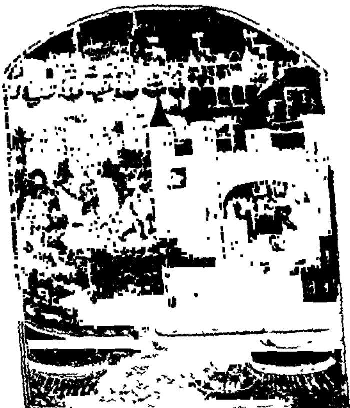
And whan I had aduysed me in this sayd boke I delybered and concluded to translate it in-to englysshe And forthwyth toke a penne and ynke and wrote a leefe or tweyne whyche I ouersawe agayn to corecte it And whan I sawe the fayr and straunge termes therin I doubted that it sholde not please some gentylmen whiche late blamed me, sayeng that in my translacyons I had ouer curyous termes whiche coude not be vnderstande of comyn peple and desired me to vse olde and homely termes in my translacyons And fayn wolde I satisfye euery man, and so to doo, toke an olde boke and redde therein a d certaynly the englysshe was so rude and brood that I coude not wele understand it And certaynly our langage now vsed varyeth ferre from that whiche was vsed and spoken when I was borne And that comyn englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from another In so moche that in my dayes happened that certayn marchauntes were in a shippe in Tamyse *for to haue* sayled ouer the see into *Selande, and for lacke of wynde thei* taryed atte Forlond [North Foreland in Kent] *and wente to*

1 Early English Text Society, 1890, pp 1-4

lande for to refreshe them And one of theym named Sheffelde a mercer cam in to an hows and axed for mete, and specyally he axyed after eggys and the goode wyf answerde that she coude speke no frenshe And the marchaunt was angry for he also coude speke no frenshe but wolde haue hadde egges and she vunderstode hym not And therne at laste another sayd that he wolde haue eyren then the good wyf sayd that she vnderstod hym wel Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte egges or eyren ?

Certainly it is harde to playse euery man by cause of dyuersite and chaunge of langage And som honest and grete clerkes haue ben wyth me and desired me to wryte the moste curyous termes that I coulde fynde And thus between playn rude and curyous I stand abasshed but in my judgemente the comyn termes that be dayli vsed ben lyghter to be vnderstonde than the olde and auncyent englysshe And for as moche as this present Booke is not for a rude vplondyssh man to laboure therein ne rede it but onely for a clerke and a noble gentylman that feleth and vnderstondeth in faytes of armes in loue and in noble chyualrye therefor in a meane bytwene bothe I haue reduced and trans lated this sayd booke in to our englysshe not ouer rude ne curyous but in suche termes as shall be vnderstanden by goddys grace accordynge to my copye

We thus see that Caxton had a choice to make He had no dictionaries to cramp or to guide him As he sat in his book littered study considering the matter he had not as we have and as even Shakespeare had an English language given whose limits he might extend but whose framework he must accept The number of dialects were almost as numerous as the counties of England and moreover they were perpetually changing The northerner the west country man even the housewife of Kent with her eyren could not easily under stand either the London merchant or one another The victory of the speech of London and the Court may perhaps have been ult mately inevitable but it was rendered certain and rapid first by Chaucer and his fifteenth century imitators who drove the west midland dialect of *Piers Plowman* out of the field among the educated classes then by the products of Caxton s press and last and most of all by the English Bible and Prayer Book which in Tudor times thanks to the printing press



117 The wharves crowded with vessels of many nations stretched down the river from the Bridge to the Tower

decorated with ever fresh supplies of traitors heads to the royal palace and armoury at the Tower [117]

The merchant aristocracy that ruled the capital wisely resisted the temptation to take an active part in the struggle of the rival families for the Crown (it was only in Stuart times that London was in a position to make and unmake kings) But they compelled the armies of the Red and White Roses to respect London s liberties and commerce, and each successive

From the middle of the fourteenth century onwards the manufacture and export of cloth were growing at the expense of the export of raw wool In other words the Merchant Adventurers were gaining ground at the expense of the Staplers The cloth trade enriched inland towns like Colchester, where it was collected and the ports whence it was shipped especially London But the actual manufacture of the cloth was carried out chiefly in rural areas and many country villages acquired a richer and more varied life that was partly industrial The skilled manufacture of cloth for the open market had ever since the thirteenth century been leaving the towns and migrating to the country The day was still far distant when the mechanical inventions of the eighteenth and subsequent centuries would reverse the movement and herd English workmen back into the cities Except London most English towns in the fifteenth century were stationary or decl[illegible]

attempted to prevent the competition of rival manufacture by prohibiting the merchants of their towns from dealing with country cloth makers But these restricting efforts were spasmodic and vain For in this question the town merchants had the opposite interest to the town craftsmen and were more influential in the control of municipal policy The great merchants therefore continued on an ever increasing scale to operate the cloth trade in both town and country on a capitalist system They supplied the raw material to the village craftsman who owned his own loom They then took back the woven

1 See Professor Postan (*Economic History Review* May 1939 pp 164 5) according to him the great increase in the cloth trade had been made in the second half of the fourteenth century and was resumed in Tudor times in the last twenty [illegible]

government, whether of Henry VI, Edward IV, Richard III, or Henry VII, regarded the friendship of her merchants as indispensable to the solvency of the national exchequer Edward IV courted their friendship in personal and domestic visits to the City, almost beneath the dignity of a king The Staplers continued to lend money to government The wool off the royal estates, and off the land of political magnates like Lord Hastings and the Earl of Essex, was sold abroad through the good offices of London merchants Gentry like the Stonors, owning West Country sheep runs, were proud to be styled Merchants of the Staple The 'landed and monied interests were often indistinguishable, even at this early date Wealth acquired in trade already flowed into and fertilized the land The younger sons of the gentry, apprenticed to London masters, rose to be City magnates

Not only London but the other towns enjoyed peace during the Wars of the Roses by the practice of virtual neutrality, and by paying small sums for presents to the King and other political personages, national and local, as also to the judges for their favour in court Thus in the accounts of the Borough of Cambridge in 1484 5 we read such items as

For a present given to the Lord the King, namely, in fishes £6 5s od
In a present given to the Chief Justice of the Lord King, namely in wine, spice, fish, and bread 5s
In a present given to the Bishop [sic] of York 8s 6d
For a present given to the Duke of Norfolk 6s 8d
To William Copley for having his friendship 6s 8d
In wine to the Duke of Norfolk 2s 8d [1]

Cambridge town also paid its burgesses of Parliament 12d a day each during the session, total 33s, though one of the two members 'released his part The new mayor had 20s each year to buy his magnificent robes, and much money was paid for 'minstrels', and for their vestments These sums of course represented something very much larger in terms of modern money, a country parson who had £10 a year from all sources was considered to have a tolerable income

1 Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge*, I, pp 230 31



120 A fifteenth-century stone manor house L ttle Sodbury Gloucestersh re

many good years and long to live in health and virtue to his pleasure Written at Calais the first of June when every man was gone to his d nner and the clock smote noon and all our house hold cried after me and bad me come down Come down to dinner at once! And what answer I gave to them ye know of old

More than four and a half centuries have slipped by since that old clock smote noon at Calais but Thomas Betson as he rises from his writing-desk and folds the letter with a smile on his face is an Englishman we can all understand and like [1]

1 *Stonor Letters* Camden Society 11 pp 6 8 (spelling modernized) The English merchants of the Staple like Betson were the principal buyers of ool in the western shires but they had to compete w th Italian merchants who rode about the Cotswolds on a like errand The Staplers sh pped to Calais the English wool that suppl ed the Low Countries and northern Europe but they d d l ttle business in the Med terranean The Italian merchants had royal l cence to sh p Engl sh wool d rect by the Stra ts of Gibraltar to the Italian looms

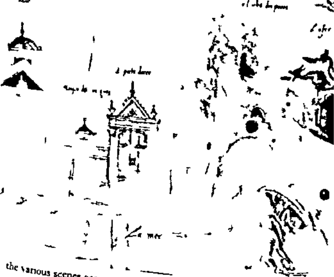
our court cards is still based on late fifteenth-century costume Cards served, like chess, to while away the tedious winter evenings of the manor-house and supplied the gambler with an alternative to dice

Shooting at the butts was encouraged by proclamation and statute at the expense of rival forms of amusement, such as 'handball, football, or hockey', in order to preserve England s military monopoly of archery with the long bow It remained a monopoly, because it was an art not easily acquired Hugh Latimer described how his yeoman father in Henry VII s reign

taught me how to draw how to lay my body in my bow I had my bows bought me according to my age and strength, as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger For men shall never shoot well unless they be brought up to it [see note, p 43]

At the archery competitions, leaders dressed in the parts of 'Robin Hood and Little John led the village procession to the butts

In towns and wealthier villages, many guilds – not merely the craft guilds – helped to organize pageantry and merriment On every possible occasion, national or local men rejoiced in solemn processions, of which the Lord Mayor s Show and the King's opening of Parliament are today among the few survivors In those times, before it was easy to invest one s savings, much money was spent on splendour Rich men wore the most magnificent and expensive clothes and showed their wealth in plate upon their sideboards The guilds, from which priests were generally excluded, represented the growing intelligence and initiative of the laity But they were permeated, as was most of life and thought, by religious ideas The line between religion and daily life was not so strictly drawn as in modern times Men combining in a guild for a benevolent, a useful, or even a convivial purpose, liked to give a religious tinge to their



the various scenes across which the action moved

Such was the drama a hundred years and more before Shakespeare

So too the Christmas Carols represented the homely religious feeling of the laity on the eve of the Reformation

The shepherd upon a hill he sat
He had on him his tabard and his hat
His tarbox his pipe and his flagat [flageolet]
His name was called jolly jolly Wat
For he was a good herd s boy
With hoy
For in his pipe he made so much joy

Now must he go where Christ was born
Jesus I offer thee here my pipe
My skirt my tarbox and my scrip
Home to my fellows now will I skip
And also look unto my sheep
For he was a good herd s boy
With hoy
For in his pipe he made so much joy



ideas was patronized equally by the high and dry orthodox clergy and by the reforming Dean Colet On the day of St Nicholas patron saint of boys, or on Holy Innocents Day a boy dressed up as a bishop in schools and cathedrals went in procession and preached a sermon to which not only his schoolmates but the Church dignitaries were expected to listen with reverence Sometimes regular endowments were left to meet the expense and pageantry of this pretty scene in which the Dean knelt for the child s blessing

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

H S Bennett *The Pastons and their England* C L Kingsford *Prejudice and Promise in Fifteenth Century England* Eileen Power *Medieval People* Professor Postan article on the fifteenth century in the *Economic History Review* May 1939 *Cambridge Hist Journal* 1941 J Saltmarsh s *Plague and Economic Decline* Alice Stopford Green *Town Life in the 15th Century* E Lipson *An Economic History of England* vol I H Maynard Smith *Pre Reformation England* Rashdall s *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (ed Powicke and Emden) vol III *Libel of English Policy* (1436) ed Sir George Warner 1926 *Paston Letters 1422 1509* ed James Gairdner

CHAPTER FOUR

TUDOR ENGLAND

INTRODUCTION

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES?

HENRY VII, 1485 – HENRY VIII, 1509 – DISSOLUTION OF MONASTERIES, 1536–9 – EDWARD VI, 1547 – MARY, 1553 – ELIZABETH, 1558–1603

Dates and periods are necessary to the study and discussion of history for all historical phenomena are conditioned by time and are produced by the sequence of events Dates, therefore, apply a necessary test to any historical statement and are apt to be found inconveniently cumbering the path and tripping up the heels of glib generalization rushing forward with head in air There is no appeal from the verdict of a date

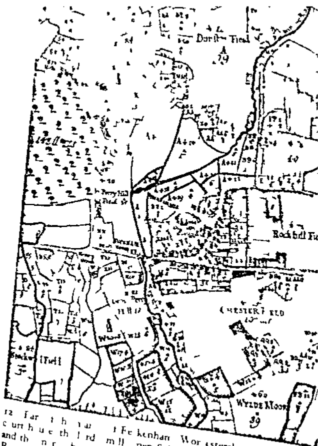
But, unlike dates periods are not facts They are retrospective conceptions that we form about past events, useful to focus discussion but very often leading historical thought astray Thus while it is certainly useful to speak of the Middle Ages and of the Victorian Age those two abstract ideas have deluded many scholars and millions of newspaper readers into supposing that during certain centuries called the Middle Ages and again during certain decades called Age of Victoria everyone thought and acted more or less in the same way till at last Victoria died or the Middle Ages came to an end But in fact there was no such sameness Individual character variety and an urge to change were marked features of the English over whom Victoria presided, and the end of her reign was very different from the beginning So, too, medieval society can only be studied fruitfully if we conceive it not as a static order but as a continuous evolution, without any definable date for its beginning or end

The habit of thinking about the past as divided into water-tight periods is most dangerous of all in economic and social

ideas, was patronized equally by the high and dry orthodox clergy and by the reforming Dean Colet On the day of St Nicholas, patron saint of boys or on Holy Innocents Day, a boy dressed up as a bishop in schools and cathedrals went in procession, and preached a sermon to which not only his schoolmates but the Church dignitaries were expected to listen with reverence Sometimes regular endowments were left to meet the expense and pageantry of this pretty scene, in which the Dean knelt for the child s blessing

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12 Far t h 1ar t Fe kenham Wor estersh r h ng the c urt h u e th l rd m ll pen fi ld th tr p cult at n and th n r hn ent lereon l ncl ure note that Ralph Bo s l sh n encr a h ng n Cheste field an t Edward Rob ns n n Perry H ll F ld

KEY A† Lord d ma n etc
H Corporate par h lards
• C n n n lands
DE and W Landh lders

history For periods have usually been assorted, as their names imply, for purely political reasons – 'the age of the Tudors', 'the age of Louis XIV', and so forth But economic and social life takes little heed of the deaths of kings or the accession of new dynasties absorbed in its own daily task it flows on, like an underground river, only occasionally making eruption into the upper daylight of politics, though it may all the time be their unacknowledged and unconscious arbiter

And it is all the more difficult to think about economic and social history in 'periods', because there is always an overlap of the old and the new continuing side by side in the same country for generations and even for centuries Different systems of production – craft and domestic and capitalist – all went on in England both in late medieval and in modern times So, too, in the agricultural world open fields, and enclosures Anglo-Saxon and modern methods were found together, from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century [49, 50, 125] And in the social sphere the feudal and the democratic spirit have had a marvellous aptitude for coexistence in our tolerant island

If, then, we are asked to name a date, or even a period, when the Middle Ages came to an end what can we safely say? Certainly not 1485 the year when Tudor rule began, though it has been found by teachers and examiners a convenient point at which to wind up the Middle Ages in England But in the real year 1485, when our simple ancestors gaped and rubbed the elbow at the news that Henry Tudor and his Welshmen had overthrown Richard III at Bosworth, they had no thought that a new era was beginning They supposed merely that the Lancastrians had again got the better for the time, of the Yorkists, in the endless and tiresome Wars of the Roses It is true that the events of the next twenty years showed that in fact the Wars of the Roses had almost but not quite ended on Bosworth field But the end of the Wars of the Roses is by no means the same thing as the end of the Middle Ages in whatever way the Middle Ages are defined

The victory of Henry the Welshman made no change distantly comparable in importance to the victory of William the Norman at Hastings For half a century after 1485, until Henry's son took the papal power and the monastic wealth into



126 Ca d na Wo e

was the Rena ssance of classical scholarship and bibl cal exegesis under Grocyn and Linacre Colet and More the English friends of Erasmus Their work more than all Wolsey s

his own hands, English society continued very much as I have described it in the last chapter The agricultural changes still continued at a slightly accelerated pace The Church went on just as before, though exposed to renewed unpopularity and denunciation, very similar to the anti-clerical outcry in the days of Langland, Chaucer, and Wyclif, but there was no evident certainty that such strictures would have any more practical outcome this time than so often of old Henry VII and young Henry VIII were both zealous in their orthodoxy; they were dutiful in the roasting of heretics, they frequently employed bishops as their counsellors of State, after the medieval custom, culminating in the grand finale of Cardinal Wolsey, who displayed on a colossal scale the pride and power of the medieval Church Himself the instrument of papal power, he greatly increased its control over the *Ecclesia Anglicana* He treated the lay nobles and gentlemen like dirt beneath his feet, thereby helping to prepare the anti-clerical revolution that accompanied his fall He kept a household of nearly a thousand persons, and marched in state with silver pillars and pole-axes borne before him Besides many other sources of wealth, he drew the revenues and neglected the duties of Archbishop of York, Bishop of Durham, and Abbot of St Albans the biographer of Wolsey and of Henry VIII estimates that the Cardinal was almost as rich a man as the King [1] He obtained for his natural son four archdeaconries, a deanery, five prebends and two rectories, and only failed in his endeavour to have him succeed in the fabulously rich see of Durham In proportion to Wolsey s pride, luxury, and greed was his munificence in founding schools and colleges of splendour then unparalleled Here [illegible]
cosm[illegible]
f[illegible]
s[illegible] with far more devotion than he served the religious interests of the Church In all this, Wolsey is one of the greatest and the most characteristic of 'medieval figures in our history, and his power was at its fullness more than forty years after Bosworth field [126]

Another aspect of that half century of calm before the storm,

1 Pollard s *Wolsey*, pp 320–21

In the secular sphere, Henry VII restored order to the countryside, and put down retainers That was an important social change, but it was not the end of the Middle Ages', rather it was the belated fulfilment of a hope of medieval [illegible]

the medieval Parliament was destined to be revived and strengthened by Henry VIII for modern purposes So, too, another great medieval institution, the English Common Law, survived the Tudor period to become the basis of modern English life and liberty

In the early sixteenth century, English trade, though again on the increase after a period of relative stagnation still ran in its old medieval channels along the coasts of northern Europe, with a new thrust into the Mediterranean for vent of cloth In spite of Cabot s voyage from Bristol to Newfoundland in the reign of Henry VII, the wider outlook across the Atlantic did not greatly affect Englishmen before Elizabeth was on the [illegible]

It is indeed useless to look for any date or even for any period, when the Middle Ages ended in England All that one can say is that in the thirteenth century English thought and society were medieval and in the nineteenth century they were not Yet even now we retain the medieval institutions of the monarchy the peerage the Commons in Parliament assembled the English Common Law the Courts of Justice interpreting the rule of law the hierarchy of the established C[illegible]

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It is indeed useless to look for any date, or even for any period, when the Middle Ages ended in England All that one can say is that in the thirteenth century English thought and society were medieval and in the nineteenth century they were not Yet even now we retain the medieval institutions of the monarchy the peerage the Commons in Parliament assembled the English Common Law the Courts of Justice interpreting the rule of law the hierarchy of the established Church the parish system the universities the public schools and grammar schools And unless we become a totalitarian state and forget all our Englishry there will always be something medieval in our ways of thinking, especially in our idea that people and corporations have rights and liberties which [illegible]

downward with ever increasing momentum towards the big estates and farms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the industrial capitalism of modern times This may well be true But it is a question whether the end of the Middle Ages might not as well be sought in the consummation of economic and social change in the reign of George III, as in the Tudor beginnings Nor in fact did these things begin first under the Tudors as noted in former chapters of this book capitalism was established in some important trades long before So too the emancipation of serfs and the consequent break up of the medieval manor system had actually been accomplished before ever Bosworth Field was fought

Where then shall we place the end of medieval society and economics in the fourteenth the sixteenth or the eighteenth

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the old Owing to the mechanization of life man has changed more in the last hundred years than in the previous thousand It is not unlikely therefore that the real beginning of modern times if modern times are to include our own will be allocated to the growth of the Industrial Revolution rather than to the Renaissance and Reformation And even in the realm of thought and religion the impact of science and Darwin may come to seem as memorable as the impact of Erasmus and Luther

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Where then shall we place the end of medieval society and economics in the fourteenth the sixteenth or the eighteenth centuries? Perhaps it matters little what does matter is that we should understand what really happened It is probable that ere long a new perspective of periods in the past will replace the old Owing to the mechanization of life man has changed more in the last hundred years than in the previous thousand It is not unlikely therefore that the real beginning of modern times if modern times are to include our own will be allocated to the growth of the Industrial Revolution rather than to the Renaissance and Reformation And even in the realm of thought and religion the impact of science and Darwin may come to seem as memorable as the impact of Erasmus and Luther

It is of course the Renaissance and the Reformation of which people are chiefly thinking when they ascribe the end of the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century[1] In the spheres of thought and religion of clerical power and privilege we may indeed say that the medieval scheme of things was abolished in Tudor England Yet even this is not true without qualification about the land that Elizabeth ruled The Protestantizing and secularizing of England was not complete till after the Puritan Rebellion and the Whig Tory Revolution or rather

1 An ... narch es But
Englanc ... l Mon
arch ... VIII s
assum pt on of rel gious powe ... further

was as much a triumph of the Renaissance as of the Reformation The two became one and partly for that reason Shakespeare s England had a charm and a lightness of heart, a free aspiring of mind and spirit not to be found elsewhere in the harsh Jesuit Calvinist Europe of that day And at the same auspicious moment England s old song of the sea became a new ocean song The Elizabethan adventurers Drake Frobisher, Hawkins Ralegh and the rest – were sailing the wide world discovering islands far away , opening to their countrymen at home new realms of hope and fancy committing indeed crimes in Ireland and in the slave trade but without knowing that they were crimes or what the dreadful consequences were to be in the deep of time The music of the Elizabethan madrigal and the lyric poetry to which it was wedded expressed the reasonable joy in life of a people freed from medieval and not yet oppressed by Puritan complexes and fears rejoicing in nature and the countryside in whose lap they had the felicity to live moving forward to a healthy agricultural and mercantile prosperity and not yet overwhelmed by the weight of industrial materialism

... found its perfect expression before it passed away –
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If all aspects of life are taken into consideration we may perhaps agree with the historian of the reign of Henry VIII, that of all the schisms which rend the woven garment of historical understanding the worst is that which fixes a deep gulf between medieval and modern history [1]

But before this brief golden age corresponding to the lifetime

[1] A F Pollard Wolsey p 8

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All this found its perfect expression before it passed away – in Shakespeare s plays In them we see the immense step forward that had been taken in the realm of thought and feeling, away from the ancient limits The play of *Hamlet*, that at least is modern Also in the English church service in every parish, and in the wide study of the English Bible in the homes of rich and poor we *can* say the English mind and imagination had in those respects already ceased to be medieval But society, politics and economics still very much more closely resembled those of the fourteenth than of the twentieth century, the author of *Richard II* and *Henry IV* found it easy to understand and portray that not very distant world

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130 The coronation procession of Edward VI

of Shakespeare (1564 1616), Tudor England had known a long period of *malaise* She did not, indeed suffer from wars of religion such as devastated France, because here monarchy ... stronger and religious fanaticism less strong But the Tudor ... through without attendant misery of ecclesiastic... changes Mary coincided with a grave econo... , and agriculture due chiefly to a rise in prices That rise we must ascribe partly to world causes and partly to Henry's wanton debasing of the coinage Of these things among much else, it will be my business to deal in the chapters that follow [130, 131]

CHAPTER FIVE

ENGLAND DURING THE ANTI-CLERICAL REVOLUTION

The advent of the first English antiquary, John Leland, may, if we wish, be taken for a sign that the Middle Ages were indeed passing away and becoming matter for retrospect For nearly ten years (1534–43) Leland travelled through the length and breadth of Henry VIII's kingdom, diligently seeking out and observing things new and old [1] He noted much that was flourishing, but he had also a loving and learned eye for the past, to discern

> by Time's fell hand defaced
> The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age

Many lofty towers he saw 'down razed', especially three kinds of ruin – dilapidated castles crumbling walls of towns and the housebreakers beginning their work upon the roofs of the abbeys

Many castles indeed Leland saw that had been adapted to the domestic uses of a later age, and had long years of splendour still before them But many others (like royal Berkhamsted where the Black Prince kept court) had after the Wars of the Roses been abandoned by the frugal policy of Henry VII, while private owners often condemned their ancestral fortresses as fit neither to withstand cannon planted on a neighbouring eminence, nor to house nobles and gentlemen with modern comfort Leland, therefore, reports on many a feudal stronghold that 'tendith to ruin', some stripped of their roofs their

1 *The Itinerary of John Leland* edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith, 1906–10



132 The thin stone curtain of the old city wall in the grounds of New College Oxford

walls a quarry for the village or the new manor house the

reasons had combined to bring about their decay The thin stone curtain such as can still be seen in the grounds of New College

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in Leland s day outgrown their antique suits of stone armour and had thrust out suburbs and ribbon development along the roads of approach Other less fortunate towns shrunk and impoverished by economic change had no money to waste on keeping up walls which the Tudor peace rendered no longer needful More generally the decadence of the walls was a symptom of the decline of that intense civic patriotism which had inspired medieval townsfolk. National control and individual initiative were taking the place of the corporate spirit of town and guild not only in matters of government and of military defence but in trade and industry as witness the

new learning, approved – the diffusion of the English Bible among all classes [129], the destruction of the cruder forms of idolatry and relic-mongering, the substitution at Oxford and Cambridge of Renaissance scholarship for scholastic philosophy and canon law – measures which constituted in Henry's eyes an orthodox and Catholic reform Having done all this, he continued to abhor and persecute Protestants, and if he had not done so he might have lost his throne in the then state of opinion None the less, he had created a new social and ecclesiastical order of things which, as the changing years went by, could only be maintained on a more definitely Protestant basis

The Reformation in England was at once a political, a religious, and a social event All three of its aspects were closely interwoven but, so far as division is possible this volume is concerned only with its social causes and effects Anti-clericalism is a social phenomenon, compatible with many different forms of belief about religion And anti-clericalism was the keynote of the movement of opinion, equally felt among the learned and the vulgar, which rendered possible the breach with the Papacy and the Dissolution of the Monasteries, at a [illegible]

religious and in the main orthodox, but inflamed with indignation at the tricks by which the baser sort of clergy conjured money from the ignorant and superstitious They were specially hostile to the monks and friars as protagonists of obscurantism, upholders of scholastic philosophy and opponents of that direct study of the Greek Testament to which Erasmus and Colet [illegible]

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for which Christ cares nothing yet managing therewith to lead a life of luxury

gorging the carcase to the point of bursting

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Henry VIII had himself been educated in the scholarly anti-clericalism of Erasmus and his Oxford friends – men sincerely religious and in the main orthodox, but inflamed with indignation at the tricks by which the baser sort of clergy conjured money from the ignorant and superstitious. They were specially hostile to the monks and friars as protagonists of obscurantism, upholders of scholastic philosophy and opponents of that direct study of the Greek Testament to which Erasmus and Colet appealed as a criterion of religious truth.

Some, indeed, of the writings of Erasmus conveyed the most uncompromising spirit of anti-clericalism. In the *Praise of Folly* he denounces the monks for

> observing with punctilious scrupulosity a lot of silly ceremonies and paltry traditional rules
>
> for which Christ cares nothing, yet managing therewith to lead a life of luxury
>
> gorging the carcase to the point of bursting

to get 3d a day, and may have at least 20d a day to sleep an hour with a friar, a monk or a priest?

The conclusion reached by the pamphleteer is that the clergy, especially the monks and friars, should be deprived of their wealth for the benefit of the King and Kingdom, and made to work like other men, let them also be allowed to marry and so be induced to leave other people s wives alone

Such crude appeals to lay cupidity, and such veritable coarse anger at real abuses uncorrected down the centuries, had been generally prevalent in London under Wolsey s régime, and at his fall such talk became equally fashionable at Court In those days, whenever the capital and the Court were agreed on a policy, the battle was already half won And judging by the readiness with which the Reformation Parliament followed Henry s lead similar feelings must have been widely spread in the country at large though least in the northern counties, where feudal and religious loyalty to the Church and the monasteries still prevailed

In the face of this storm of opinion, now directed to practical issues by the King what would be the attitude of the clergy, thus threatened and arraigned? Their submission or their resistance would be an event of the utmost importance to the whole future development of English society If the clerical body bishops priests monks, and friars had stood together for the high privileges and liberties of the Medieval Church, and had arrayed themselves under the papal banner, they would scarcely have been overcome certainly not without a struggle that would have rent England to pieces But in fact the clergy were not only scared by the union against them of the King and so many of his subjects, they were themselves genuinely divided in opinion A large number of clergymen were in close and daily contact with laymen and understood their way of thinking The English priesthood had not got the spiritual isolation or the discipline of a caste like the Roman Catholic clergy of today

The bishops for example, were first and foremost royal

The contemptible friars and their preaching come off no better

> Their whole demeanour in preaching is such that you might swear they had taken lessons from a set of itinerant mountebanks though indeed the mountebanks are out and out their superiors

and so forth for pages together

If the most learned and polished man in Europe who deprecated Luther s robust and headlong proceedings could write thus in Latin about the monks and friars it can be imagined what was the tone of popular anti clerical writers appealing to the common English in their own tongue The printing press busily circulated such attacks making direct appeal to the greed of the laity in view of the vast landed wealth of a Church that had for a while lost its only defences against spoliation – moral influence and religious awe

For example a few years before the Dissolution of the Monasteries Henry VIII read without apparent disapproval and Londoners read with loudly expressed delight the pamphlet of Simon Fish entitled *Supplication of the Beggars* Its form was an address to the King

> In the times of your noble predecessors past craftily crept into this your realm an other sort (not of impotent but) of strong puisant and counterfeit holy and idle beggars and vagabonds the Bishops Abbots Priors Deacons Archdeacons Suffragans Priests Monks Canons Friars Pardoners and Sommoners And who is able to number this idle ruinous sort which (setting all labour aside) have begged so importunately that they have gotten into their hands more than the third part of all your Realm ? The goodliest lordships manors lands and territories are theirs Besides this they have the tenth part of all corn meadow pasture grass wool colts calves lambs pigs geese and chickens Yea and they look so narrowly upon their profits that the poor wives must be countable to them of every tenth egg or else she [sic] getteth not her rights at Easter shall be taken as a heretic How much money get the Sommoners by extortion in a year by citing the people to the Commissaries Court and afterwards releasing their appearance for money ? Who is she that will set her hands to work

to get 3d a day and may have at least 20d a day to sleep an hour with a friar a monk or a priest?

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[illegible] of todas

The bishops for example were first and foremost royal nominees and civil servants And in like manner parish priests and chaplains as has been noted in an earlier chapter often acted as business agents and trusted confidants of lords squires

and other lay patrons Even the monks were wont to have their estates managed for them largely by laymen and to submit in many things to the wishes of the patrons and founders kin, who were not infrequently lodged in the abbey precincts

It was not therefore natural to the clergy to draw together to defend themselves against lay attack The hostility with which bishops and parish priests regarded monks and friars was centuries old and was in no degree abated So too was the feeling against the papal authority which had so long merci lessly bled and exploited the Church in England And of recent years Wolsey as the Pope s *legatus a latere*, had infuriated the English clergy by overriding episcopal authority and clerical freedom Better the King than the Pope was a general feeling among them at the time of his fall There was no third choice before Convocation Wolsey, says his biographer always rode furiously, he rode papal jurisdiction in England to its death [1]

Moreover the reforming doctrines whether of Erasmus or of Luther had many secret sympathizers and open missionaries among the clergy, otherwise there would never have been a reformation in England but only a brutal struggle of anti clerical hatred with clerical privilege such as seemed to be foreshadowed in propaganda like Fish s *Supplication of the Beggars* such as in later times has actually taken place in countries that rejected the Reformation

Many different currents of thought were moving in the English clerical mind Just as the Oxford reformers responded

1 Professor Pollard adds

The essential difference between Wolsey and Henry VIII was that the Cardinal was the protagonist of the *Sacerdotium* and the King of the *regnum* and that rather than any question of theology distinguished the Roman from the Anglican Church The one was a priest ridden the other a king ridden body Wolsey had reduced the Church to a despotism whose liberties consisted in its jurisdiction over the laity and not in its government of itself By Henry s conquest and annexa tion the *Ecclesia Anglicana* was saved from sinking into a church of Wolsey s conception purely papal and autocratic and incompatible with the spirit of self determination which was informing and trans forming the nation as a whole And into the sphere of church govern ment were thereby injected the discords and debates which are the representative signs of popular interest and intellectual life (*Wolsey* pp 369-70)

to Erasmus in the reign of Henry VII, so in the reign of his son the Cambridge reformers, including Cranmer and Latimer, Tyndale and Coverdale, responded to the impulse of Luther from oversea And without being definitely Lutherans, many of the clergy sincerely desired to reform their own profession and were by no means in love with all its privileges Many even of the expropriated monks and dissolved friars became Protestant clergymen under Edward VI, and there is no reason to suppose that they were hypocrites

English opinion, lay and clerical, was a shifting kaleidoscope It was not yet divided between two fixed and clearly divided parties, one of reform, the other of reaction And in the confusion the King's eclectic will prevailed His anti-papal, [illegible] the [illegible] 536), [illegible] like Norfolk and Shrewsbury, and bishops like Gardiner and Bonner, all of whom desired to burn Lutherans as much as Henry himself [1] On the other hand, two chief lights of academic renaissance and reform, More and Fisher, the dear friends of Erasmus, suffered death rather than agree to the repudiation of papal authority and the subjection of the Church to the State

The dissolution of the orders of monks and friars was a natural outcome of the attitude towards religion, life, and society that Erasmus and his English friends had done so much to propagate The men of the new learning in classical and Biblical study now dominant at Court as well as in the Universities had been taught to regard the monks and friars as the obscurantist enemies of the new movement And the ascetic [illegible]

maintained at vast expense [2]

1 It is indeed worthy of comment that of the leading [illegible]

beneficial to the public Some indeed of the monks' money he spent on fortifying the harbours of the Kingdom and the arsenals of the Royal Navy

Henry did not, as it is sometimes stated, distribute any large proportion of the monastic lands and tithes gratis among his *courtiers* He sold much the greater part of them [1] He was driven by his financial necessities to sell, though he would have preferred to keep more for the Crown The potential value of the estates, enjoyed in times to come by the lay purchasers or their heirs, was very great compared to the market prices they had actually paid to the necessitous King or to the merchant speculators who bought them up from Henry to re sell to the local squirearchy Therefore the ultimate beneficiary of the Dissolution was not religion, not education, not the poor, not even in the end the Crown, but a class of fortunate gentry, of whom more will be said when we come to consider the changes going on in social and agricultural life

A good deal of monastic, chantry, and other ecclesiastical land and tithe remained in the hands of the Crown for several generations But financial necessity induced Elizabeth, James, and Charles I gradually to part with it all to private purchasers

The coalfields particularly in Durham and Northumberland had been, to a predominant extent ecclesiastical property But owing to the action of Henry VIII this source of future wealth, which from Stuart times onwards was to be developed on an immense scale, passed into the hands of private gentlemen, whose descendants founded many powerful and some noble families out of coal Yet even from the remnant left to the Church the Ecclesiastical Commission a few years ago was drawing nearly £400,000 a year – a seventh part of all coal royalties [2]

Besides the gentry, another class that benefited by the Dissolution of the Monasteries were the citizens of towns like St Albans and Bury St Edmunds, now released from the stranglehold of monastic lordship against which they had been in fierce rebellion for centuries past On the other hand, the

1 See Appendix II pp 497–9 of H A L Fisher's vol v of the *Political History of England* table of Disposition of Monastic Lands

2 Nef, *Rise of the British Coal Industry* 1 pp 134–5

That question was asked by the man in the street particularly in London And it was pressed by certain interested parties The weakest of these were reforming clergymen like Latimer who hoped that the monastic wealth would go to endow education and religion they were the more deceived Then there were the lay neighbours and patrons of the monasteries, who looked to succeed to their estates on easy terms of purchase and who were seldom disappointed Next the King himself whose profligate finance and foolish wars in France had emptied his treasury sought to refill it by confiscation And lastly the House of Commons was only too glad to evade the unpopularity of voting taxation of their constituents by passing the Bills for the disendowment of the monasteries

An obstinate refusal to pay taxes was a characteristic of the English at this period A new tax of any weight even though voted by Parliament was liable to produce a rebellion in some part of the country and the Tudors had no standing army Henry therefore in the last part of his reign sought relief for his financial embarrassments from two sources first the monastic wealth and after that the debasement of the coinage Both these expedients had as we shall see important social consequences

For a short while the sale of the monastic lands replenished the King s treasury If Henry had not been bankrupt he might never have dissolved the monasteries at all or he might have kept all their lands and tithes for the Crown and so perhaps enabled his successors to establish absolute monarchy in England or again he might have given more of their wealth to education and charity as at first he intended to do had not his financial needs been so pressing Even as it was he founded Trinity as a college on a larger scale than any other at Cambridge He was probably inspired to that good deed by the example of Cardinal College (Christ Church) which Wolsey had recently founded at Oxford also out of the spoils of monasteries for the diversion of monastic lands and tithes was not an invention either of Henry or of the Reformation [137, 138] But considering the enormously greater opportunities of the King he did very little for the endowment of institutions

beneficial to the public. Some indeed of the monks money he spent on fortifying the harbours of the Kingdom and the arsenals of the Royal Navy

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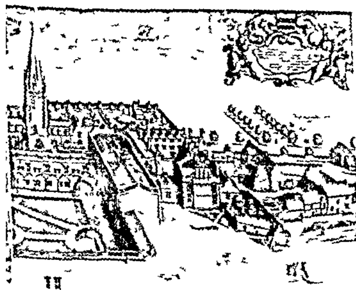
were ladies of good family whom their relations had provided for in the life of religion as they could not be suitably married The convents were not an important factor in English social life [1]

But the social consequences of the Dissolution of the Monasteries require more consideration How far did their tenants their servants and the poor suffer by the change

As regards estate management there is less than no reason to suppose that either the secular or regular clergy were easier landlords than laymen before the Dissolution The Domesday of Enclosures of 1517 shows that evictions were as common on ecclesiastical as on lay estates and that while the average rental value of lands in the hand of owners are considerably lower in the case of ecclesiastics than of lay owners the rents of lands let by ecclesiastics are higher [2] The abbeys were accused by Sir Thomas More of turning tillage into pasture and by popular rhymers of extortionate renting as well as of enclosing

[1] For the nuns in the fifteenth century see Eileen Power's *Medieval English Nunneries* Something has been said of them on pp 144 50

[2] R H S *Domesday of Enclosures* Leadam pp 48 65



How have the abbeys their payment?
A new way they do invent
Letting a dozen farms under one,
Which one or two rich franklins
Occupying a dozen men's livings
Take all in their own hands alone

Where a farm for twenty pounds was set,
Under thirty they would *not it let*.[1]

In fact the monks had to a large extent handed over the control of their estates to laymen. The abbey lands were often managed, and the farms taken on lease and sublet, by noblemen, gentlemen, and 'franklins', who ran them very much as other estates were run, enclosing land where it was profitable to enclose, turning copyholders into tenants at will and raising rents if prices rose or the value of the farms increased. When, at the Dissolution, the monastic property passed into lay ownership, the existing lay management continued as before *in much the same spirit towards the tenants*. *But as, owing to* Henry VIII's debasement of the coinage, the reign of his son was a period of soaring prices, all landlords new and old, if they would not be ruined, had to raise their rents whenever leases and copies fell in. The 'new men' were therefore denounced, sometimes rightly but very often unfairly, for doing what the monks would have had to do in like price-conditions, and for continuing an estate policy for which abbots had, in *former times, been abused with equally good or bad reason*. As years went by, the past was seen through a golden haze, and a tradition grew up that the monks had been particularly easy landlords – a tradition that modern research has not confirmed.[2]

Apart from the tenants of the monastic lands, who cannot be positively said to have either gained or lost by the Dissolution, there was also a great army of servants, more numerous than

1 Date 1527–8, Tawney and Power, *Tudor Ecclesiastical Documents*, III, pp. 20–21.

2 For what I say about the monasteries in this chapter see Baskerville, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries*, Savine, *English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution* (*Oxford Studies*, edited by Vinogradoff, 1909), Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, 1926.

the monks themselves who were employed in the domestic service of the abbeys It had been the custom to denounce them as idle abbeylubbers apt to do nothing but only to eat and drink [1] They were probably no better and no worse than the great households of serving men that noblemen and gentlemen loved to keep up after Henry VII had disarmed their military retainers Serving men were not admired even in Shakespeare s day These monastic dependants were many of them taken over by the new proprietors especially by such as converted the abbey buildings into a manor house But no doubt a certain proportion lost their places and swelled the ranks of the sturdy beggars which the monks themselves had no need to do owing to their pensions

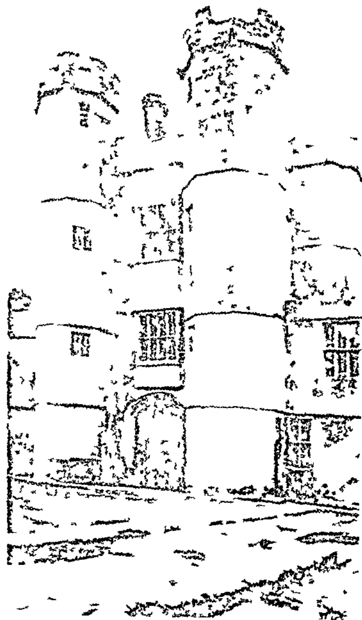
Many of the abbey servants had been young gentlemen of the squire class attached to the monastery wearing its livery administering its estates presiding over its manorial courts acting as stewards bailiffs gentlemen farmers Besides these gentlemen servants paid officers of the monks there were wealthy guests and corrodians living in the abbey at its charges And there were noblemen and gentlemen who as patrons or founders kin exerted great influence over the administration of the House The lay upper class had got its fingers deep in the monastic pie long before the Dissolution In some aspects, the secularization of the monastic lands was a gradual process and the Dissolution only a last step

But there were always the poor at the gate They duly received broken meats and a dole of money The custom represented an ancient tradition and doctrine of Christian duty which was of priceless value But in practice according to the historian [of] our Poor Law the monastic charity being unorganized and indiscriminate did nearly as much to increase beggars as to relieve them [3] Presumably the cessation of the dole at the abbey gate did something in the first instance to increase the number of beggars elsewhere but there is no evidence that the problem which mendicancy presented was

1 Starkey s *England temp H VIII* Early English Text Society p 131

2 Baskerville chap 11 and *passim* Savine op cit pp 244-67

3 Leonard *Poor Law* p 18



Tudor reigns, the beggars coming to town' preyed on the fears of dwellers in lonely farms and hamlets and exercised the minds of magistrates, Privy Councillors and Parliaments Gradually a proper system of poor relief based upon compulsory rates and discriminating between the various classes of the indigent was evolved in England first of all the countries of Europe It was soon found that the whipping of sturdy beggars was by itself no solution The double duty of providing work for the unemployed and charity for the impotent was gradually recognized by Tudor England as incumbent not merely on the Church and the charitable but on society as a whole In the reign of Henry VIII some great towns like London and Ipswich organized the administrative relief of their poor At the end of Elizabeth s reign and under the early Stuart kings it had become a duty prescribed by national legislation enforced upon the local magistrates by a vigilant Privy Council and paid for by compulsory Poor Rates [1]

After the monasteries the chantries! Henry VIII was already preparing an attack upon them when death took him where kings can steal no more On the accession of Edward VI (1547) Protestant doctrine triumphed and prayers for the dead were pronounced superstitious As that was the specific purpose of chantries their spoliation had now the cover of religious zeal The ramp as our generation would call it of greedy statesmen and their parasites at Court and of rural gentry living near to chantry lands became more shameless under the boy king than under his formidable old father Henry had at least

1 About the year 1550 Robert Crowley thus writes in his *Epigrams*

I heard two beggars that under an hedge sate
Who did with long talk their matters debate
They had both sore legs most loathsome to see
All raw from the foot well most to the knee
My leg quoth the one I thank God is fair
So is mine quoth the other in a cold air
For then it looketh raw and as red as any blood
I would not have it healed for any world s good
No man would pity me but for my sore leg
Wherefore if I were whole I might in vain beg
I should be constrained to labour and sweat
And perhaps sometime with scourges be beat

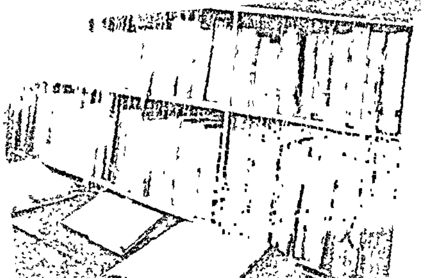
care of the village was a duty recognized by many a squire's wife, sometimes even by a peeress like Lettice, Lady Falkland who used to visit the sick dose them, and read to them The Lady Bountiful of the manor house and her lord often did as much for the poor as had been done by the later monasteries

How far the poor positively lost by the dissolution of the monasteries remains obscure but it is plain as noonday that a great chance was missed of endowing the poor as well as education and learning This was realized by many at the time especially by the reforming clergy like Latimer and Crowley About 1550 Crowley wrote

> As I walked alone and mused on things
> That have in my time been done by great Kings
> I bethought me of the Abbeys that sometimes I saw
> Which are now suppressed all by a Law
> O Lord (thought I then) what occasion was here
> To provide for learning and make poverty cheer!
> The lands and the jewels that hereby were had
> Would have found godly preachers which might well had led
> The people aright that now go astray
> And have fed the poor that famish every day

Instead of that a further impetus had been given to a tendency already strong enough the rise to dominance of the class of landowning gentry whose power replaced that of the great nobles and ecclesiastics of the feudal ages and whose word was to be law in the English countryside for centuries to come [134 135 139 47]

The bands of sturdy beggars who alarmed society in the early Tudor reigns were recruited from many sources the ordinary unemployed the unemployable soldiers discharged after French wars and the Wars of the Roses retainers disbanded at Henry VII's command serving men set adrift by impecunious lords and gentry Robin Hood bands driven from their woodland lairs by deforestation and by the better enforcement of the King's peace, ploughmen put out of work by enclosures for pastures and tramps who prudently pretended to belong to that much commiserated class All through the





49 Edward VI granting the Royal Palace of Bridewell for a hospital

Yorkshire by subscription among its 'statesman' freeholders

educated, had been founded in the reign of Elizabeth by Archbishop Sandys.

A typical 'new man' of the Tudor age was Nicholas Bacon, father of Francis and son of the sheepreeve to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds [150, 151]. Nicholas Bacon rose by law and politics to be owner of many of the farms on which his father had served the monks as one of their bailiffs. He founded a free grammar school on those lands, with scholarships thence to Cambridge, and gave other endowments to his old College of Corpus Christi, Cambridge

While the land hunger enabled the landlord to effect changes in rent and in agricultural method, the rise in prices compelled him to do so or be ruined Between 1500 and 1560 the prices that the landlord had to pay for the things he bought for himself and his household had much more than doubled, food had nearly trebled Unless then the landlords were to accept ruin they must raise rents when leases fell in, and they must turn land to its most profitable use – even in some cases to pasture instead of arable [1]

But this excuse was scarcely considered at all by popular anger and religious sentiment Catholic and Protestant alike applied medieval ethical judgements to economic actions For example, in spite of the long established practice of businessmen law and opinion still attempted to forbid as usury all interests on money lent So far did legislation lag behind reality that as late as 1552 an Act of Parliament prohibited all taking of interest as a vice most odious and detestable At length in 1571 this Act was repealed and interest not exceeding ten per cent ceased to be criminal

It is not surprising then that preachers pamphleteers and poets denounced enclosure as immoral and higher rents as extortionate Some of them were so no doubt but on the whole the landlords were acting under financial compulsion Economic necessity became indeed the tyrant s plea for much oppression and was too glibly used in later centuries when the dismal science of Political Economy bore iron rule over the minds of men But much of the Tudor writing on these questions suffered from the opposite fault and was not economic enough It blamed the wickedness of individuals alone instead of looking for root causes and remedies

1 There were three stages of the price rise under the Tudors (1) 1510 40 Owing to production of silver in Germany and the dispersal of Henry VII s hoarded treasure by Henry VIII prices of foodstuffs go up 30 per cent Other prices rise less (2) 1541-61 Owing to Henry VIII s debasement of the coin (and a little later to American silver-mines beginning to take effect) prices of all kinds rush up about 100 per cent more (3) 1561 82 Owing to Mary s better finance and Elizabeth s re-coinage prices are stabilized, and rise more slowly Then in early Stuart times American silver mines again raise prices to peak 1643 52 after that prices fall



leases or copyhold tenures of the kind that was by law not breakable, reaped the full advantage from the soaring prices of their products because their rents could not be raised Since therefore the landlords could not raise rents all round in

... extorting high rents

other less fortu-

... eases were renew-

a period of years

The result was that one group of peas... was coining money without paying an extra penny of rent while another group, not socially distinguishable except by the date of their leases or the legal forms of their tenure, were being oppressed all the more to make up for the immunity enjoyed by the others Meanwhile the yeoman freeholder who paid no rent or a purely nominal one to the lord of the manor, was selling his corn and cattle for three times the price that his grandfather had been able to ask

... some men flourished exceedingly, others,

g

of wages behind prices[1] But the landless labourer ... a much smaller proportion of the working-class than he is today, and as he was to some extent paid in kind his loss from the fall of the value of money was often not very great On the other hand the craftsman manufacturer, and merchant gained by the rise of prices as much as the peasant whose rent could not be raised More generally the rise of prices, which brought poverty to some and wealth to others had the effect of stimulating trade production and enterprise both in the towns and on the land It was a factor in the development of the new England of adventure and competition, replacing the old England of custom and settled rights

Before the end of the century equilibrium had been reached for a time In the last years of Edward VI a real financial reform had been begun which Mary continued and Elizabeth

1 Between 1501 and 1560 food prices had gone up as from 100 to 290 while wages in the building trade had gone up only from 100 to 169 Agricultural wages cannot be given

But there were exceptions A remarkable dialogue, written at the height of the social trouble under Edward VI, entitled *A Discourse of the Common Weal*, managed to elucidate the real truth with fairness to all parties perceiving the unavoidable effect that the price-rise must have on rent, as well as its main cause in Henry's debasement of the coinage And early in Elizabeth's reign Thomas Tusser grew lyrical as well as economic in praise of the much abused enclosures

More plenty of mutton and beef,
Corn butter, and cheese of the best
More wealth anywhere (to be brief)
More people more handsome and prest
Where find ye (go search any coast)
Than there, where enclosures are most?

But, more usually, indiscriminate abuse was poured on all enclosure, which might better have been reserved for the cases of real injustice, when lords of the manor enclosed from the poor their due commons Equally indiscriminate was the attack on the gentry as cormorants and greedy gulls because they raise our rents Yet owing to the price rise, peasants and farmers were selling their produce at two or three times the old money, while their landlords were paying proportionately more for all they bought [1] How then could rents fail to rise? But the mind of the community still essentially medieval in outlook, thought the right basis of social economics was not competition but immemorial custom even when the fall in the value of money and the soaring of prices was rendering old custom every day more impossible and unfair

A chief cause of social *malaise* was the casual and irregular incidence of the price-rise on various classes of men One part of the peasantry, who were lucky enough to have long term

1 This point, though noted in the *Discourse of the Common Weal* is shirked in most of the literature of the time But the poet Gascoigne early in Elizabeth's reign says of the peasants in his *Piers Plowman*

Nor that they can cry out on landlords loud
And say they rack their rents an ace too high
When they themselves do sell their landlords lamb
For greater price than ewe was wont be worth

Flodden and were still the nation s shield and buckler If the yeomanry of England were not in time of war we should be in shrewd case For in them standeth the chief defence of England [1] Other nations Englishmen boasted had no such middle class but only an oppressed peasantry and the nobles and men at arms who robbed them

A strong feeling already existed among the English against professional soldiers largely derived from memories of what had been endured by quiet folk at the hands of the lords retainers The Tudor kings had put all that down and had no standing army of their own hence their popularity The English were conscious and proud of their liberty not yet defined as the liberty of governing their king through Parliament or of printing what they liked against the authorities of Church and State but simply freedom to live their own lives undisturbed either by feudal or royal oppression In the *Discourse of the Common Weal* in Edward VI s reign the Husbandman and Merchant discuss whether there should be a standing force in England to repress tumults

> HUSBANDMAN God forbid that we have any such tyrants amongst us for as they say such will in the country of France take poor men s hens chickens pigs and other provision and pay nothing for it except it be an evil turn as to ravish his wife and daughter for it
>
> MERCHANT Marie I think that would be rather occassion of commotions to be stirred than to be quenched for the stomachs of Englishmen would never bear it

The English yeomen would not stand that kind of thing!

The new age was bringing into increasing prominence not only the yeoman but the squire He survived the difficulties of his family budget during the price crisis and emerged under Elizabeth as the principal figure in the life of the countryside The wealth and power of the country gentleman had been increased partly by their easy purchases of monastic land partly by the recent changes in the agricultural economy of their estates which the land hunger had enabled them and

1 Starkey s *England temp H VIII* Early English Text Society p 79

were too proud to work He was away making money in trade or in law He often ended life a richer and more powerful man than his elder brother left in the old home Such men bought land and founded county families of their own, for they had been bred in the countryside and to the countryside they loved to return

Foreigners were astonished at the love of the English gentry for rural life Every gentleman , they remarked, flieth into the country Few inhabit cities and towns few have any regard of them [1] Though London might already be the greatest city in Europe England was still in its essential life and feeling a rural community whereas in France and Italy the Roman had deeply implanted the civilization of the city, that drew to itself all that was most vital in the life of the surrounding province The English squire did not share the feelings of the Italian gentlemen of quality described by Robert Browning, pining unwillingly in his country home -

> Had I but plenty of money money enough and to spare
> The house for me no doubt were a house in the city square

The place for the squire whether he were rich or poor, was at home in his manor house and he knew and rejoiced in the fact

Owing to the habit among the gentry of apprenticing their younger sons to trade our country avoided the sharp division between a rigid caste of nobles and an unprivileged *bourgeoisie* which brought the French *ancien regime* to its catastrophe in 1789 Unlike the French the English gentry did not call themselves nobles - except the select few who sat in the House of Lords The manor house its hospitality open to neighbours and friends of many different classes, was not ashamed to acknowledge a son in trade, besides another at the Inns of Court and a third perhaps in the family living The landed and moneyed men might talk as if they were rivals but in fact they were allied by blood and by interest Recruits from the landed class were constantly entering town life while money and men from the towns were constantly flowing back to fertilize the countryside

1 Starkey's *England, temp H VIII* Early English Text Society p 93

Bible reading in addition to the services and sacraments of the Church These ideas and practices were by no means confined to the dissident Puritans in the late Tudor and Stuart times they were the practice of Anglican families who loved and fought for the Prayer Book The religion of the home and of the Bible became a social custom common to all English Protestants It was found most often, perhaps, in the households of squires, yeomen, and tradesmen, but it was widely extended among the cottages of the poor

The new type of English religion idealized work, dedicating business and farming to God As George Herbert quaintly and nobly wrote

> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine

It was a good religion for a nation of shopkeepers and farmers

The seed-time of these practices and ideas which in the following century became so general was the reign of Edward VI and his elder sister while Cranmer was producing the Prayer Book to stand beside the Bible, and Queen Mary was providing English Protestantism with a martyrology The anticlerical revolution of Henry VIII, with its unedifying scramble for Church property, had lacked a moral basis, but the martyrs recorded in Foxe's book provided one for the new national religion beginning to emerge out of chaos When Elizabeth came to the throne, the Bible and Prayer Book formed the intellectual and spiritual foundation of a new social order

The institutions of a country are always reflected in its military system During the Hundred Years War there had been two military systems Home defence against domestic rebellion and Scottish invasion, was conducted chiefly by local militia levied on a conscript basis The more difficult war in France, which required a more professional soldiery, was conducted by war bands following fighting nobles and gentlemen who enlisted and paid them, the King indented with their employers to furnish him with so many of these professionals for so much money This dual system continued under Henry VII and Henry VIII, with this difference, that the destruction of the

m l tia sufficed to make the King safe at home so long as his policy was not too unpopular But he was powerless to make conquests in Europe

While the royal army did not exist the royal navy was growing strong Sole reliance could no longer be placed on [illegible] of

navy was placed under a separate government department and organized as a standing force in the King s pay Henry VIII spent much of the royal and monastic wealth on this project He not only bu lt royal ships but establ shed dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford where the Thames estuary made a surpr e ra d difficult developed Portsmouth as a naval base and f rt fied many harbours such as Falmouth Roads

The formation of a professional navy for war purposes only was the more mportant because naval tactics were after 2 000 years entering on a new era The placing of cannon in the broadside of a vessel transformed naval war from a mere grappl ng of sh p w th hip (the method used from the days of

the ancient Egyptians and Greeks till late medieval times) into the manoeuvring of floating batteries, which first showed their strength against the Armada By proficiency in that new game England was to attain her sea-power and Empire, and Henry VIII s naval policy first put her in a way to win it [159–61]

In spite of much economic trouble, the standard of life was slowly going up in the early and middle Tudor period When the more marked advance under Elizabeth had diffused a general sense of prosperity, William Harrison, the parson, recorded in 1577 the improvement in household conditions that had taken place since his father s day *not among the nobility and gentry only but likewise of the lowest sort in most places of our south country*

Our fathers [he writes] yea and we ourselves have lien full oft upon straw pallets, covered only with a sheet under coverlets made of dagswain or hop harlots (I use their own terms) and a good round log under their heads instead of a bolster If it were so that our fathers or the good man of the house had a mattress or flockbed and thereto a sack of chaff to rest his head upon he

159 Dover Harbour at the time of Henry VIII showing fortifications

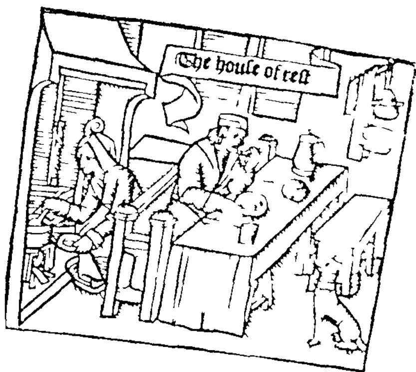


thought himself to be as well lodged as the lord of the town [village] that peradventure lay seldom in a bed of down or whole feathers Pillows were thought meet only for women in childbed As for servants, if they had any sheet above them it was well, for seldom had they any under their bodies to keep them from the pricking straws that ran oft through the canvas of the pallet and raced their hardened hides

Straw on the floor and straw in the bedding bred fleas, and some fleas carried plague

Harrison also notes that chimneys have become general even in cottages whereas in the village where I remain , old men recalled that in their young days under the two Kings Harry, there were not above two or three chimneys if so many, in uplandish towns [villages], the religious houses and manor places of their lords always excepted, but each one made his fire against a reredoss in the hall where he dined and dressed his meat The increasing use of coal instead of wood for the domestic hearth made it more disagreeable not to have chimneys and the increasing use of bricks made it easier to build them even if the walls of the house were of some other material

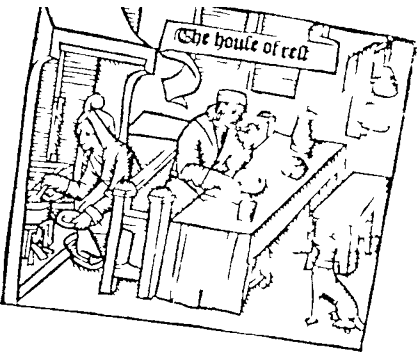



The house of rest

Tud r pe e nd r r re C n pt n W n ates Warwickshire

F untain H ll bu l n rt r from th abbey st ne




The house of rest

That gay Court owed its character to the young athletic Henry one of the best archers in his own kingdom not yet grown an obese and angry tyrant but himself the glass of fashion and the mould of form Leaving policy to his still trusted Wolsey he spent in delights and pageants and masques the treasure which his careful father had laid up for the nation s need Not to have been at Court was indeed in Touchstone s words to be damned There the gentlemen of England learnt not only the intrigues of love and politics but music and poetry and a taste for scholarship and the arts seeds which they took back to their rural homes to plant there [172 173 174] The culture art and scholarship of the Italian courts of the Renaissance had great influence on the courtiers and nobles of England from the time of the Wars of the Roses until the reign of Elizabeth The medieval distinction between the learned clerk and the barbarous fighting baron was coming to an end blending in the ideal of the all accomplished gentleman The courtier s soldier s scholar s eye, tongue, sword the Elizabethan ideal afterwards realized in Sir Philip Sidney had been rehearsed two generations before by Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 42) a kind and faithful public servant in a hard hearted and faithless Court He was just as happy in the privacy of his country estate

> Th s maketh me at home to hunt and hawk
>
> In lusty lees my liberty I take
> But here I am in Kent and Christendome
> Among the muses where I read and rhyme

The cultivated country gentleman already existed often like Wyatt half a courtier

At Court Holbein and his studio were turning out apace

1 See E K Chambers s and E M Tillyard s books on Sir Thomas Wyatt

most part were free to kill the red thief as best they could![1] Gentlemen hunted the deer, and everyone, on foot and horseback, hunted the hare – poor Wat, far off upon a hill! Horsemen and greyhounds pursued the swift footed young bustards over the downs The poaching of deer was a great feature of life the scholars of Oxford openly hunted Radley Park, till the owner was fain to throw down the pales in despair As to fowling, though the hawk, the bow, and the crossbow were still the most usual methods, the birding piece was sometimes employed[2] But snaring, liming and trapping all sorts of birds and beasts were still conducted not only for use but for sport

The English were already notorious in Europe for their devotion to horses and dogs, of which they bred and kept many varieties in great numbers But the horse was still a cumbrous animal The slim racer and hunter of eastern blood had not yet come in, and a gentleman s mount was still bred to carry a knight in his armour at full trot rather than a huntsman at full gallop The farm horse was gradually beginning to share with the ox the labours of the plough

It was still the age of the tournament [171], ridden before the eyes of sympathetic ladies and critical populace,

> The gravelled ground with sleeves tied on the helm
> On foaming horse with swords and friendly hearts

as Surrey, Henry VIII s courtier poet describes it He sings also of other play at that Court

> The dances short long tales of great delight
> With words and looks that tigers could but rue
> When each of us did plead the other s right
> The palme play [courtyard tennis] where,
>   despoiled for the game
> With dazed eyes oft we by gleams of love
> Have missed the ball and got sight of our dame
> To bait her eyes that kept the leads above

1 Yet in some districts in Elizabeth s reign foxes and badgers were 'preserved by gentlemen to hunt and have pastime withal when they would otherwise have been rooted out' Harrison says (book III ch IV)

2 *Merry Wives of Windsor* IV, ii, 58



When the Tudor age began, Venice still held the East in fee [178] The precious goods of the Indies, still borne on camels backs, continued as for ages past to reach the Levant overland Thence Venetian ships carried the spices to England, returning with cargoes of wool to feed the looms on the Adriatic The Venetian trader was therefore a well known figure in our island In 1497 one of them reported home the discovery of Newfoundland made by his countryman John Cabot, five years after Columbus s greater exploit

The Venetian our countryman who went with a ship from Bristol in quest of new islands, is returned, and says that 700 leagues from hence he discovered land the territory of the Grand Cham He coasted for 300 leagues and landed, saw no human beings but found some felled trees, wherefore he supposed there were inhabitants He is now at Bristol with his wife Vast honour is paid him he dresses in silk, and these English run after him like mad people This discoverer of these places planted on his new found land a large cross with a flag of England and another of St Mark s by reason of his being a Venetian so that our banner has floated very far afield

But it was significant of the future that the flag of St Mark had not gone thus far afield in a Venetian ship

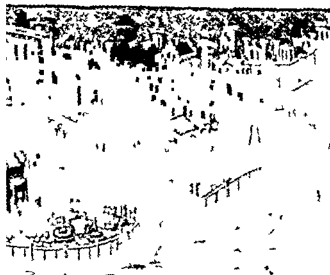
After this discovery, prophetic of an end of things for Venice and a beginning of things for England, nothing much came of it for two generations, except indeed cod fishing by English, French, and Portuguese fishermen off the Newfoundland coast[1] Throughout the early and middle Tudor period our commerce was conducted as before with the coast of Europe from the Baltic round to Spain and Portugal, most of all with the Netherlands, and above all with Antwerp, the centre of European business and finance Even more rapidly than in the fifteenth century, the export of manufactured cloth

1 The increase of deep sea fishing was a feature of early Tudor times, and helped to build up the maritime population and strength of the country, soon to be turned to such great account The herring had recently moved from the Baltic into the North Sea and our herring fishery had sprung to importance as a result *These herrings* wrote Camden which in the times of our grandfathers swarmed only about Norway now in our times by the bounty of Providence swim in great shoals round our coasts every year

by the Merchant Adventurers gained on the export of raw wool by the Staplers and the volume of London's foreign trade continued to increase In the reigns of Henry VII and VIII English ships began to trade in the Mediterranean as far as Crete *In 1486* an English consul was established at Pisa where there were English merchants exploiting Florentine rivalry against the Venetian monopoly But our goods *still* reached Italy chiefly in Italian ships

Meanwhile the Portuguese were rounding the Cape of Good Hope and opening the oceanic route to the Eastern trade a fatal blow to Venice More slowly the English followed them along the west coast of Africa in defiance of their claim to monopolize the Dark Continent As early as 1528 William Hawkins father of a great line of seamen traded in friendly fashion with the Negroes of the Guinea coast for ivory [179] It was his more famous son John who in Elizabeth's reign

8 Venetian trading ships Marco Polo sets out from Venice

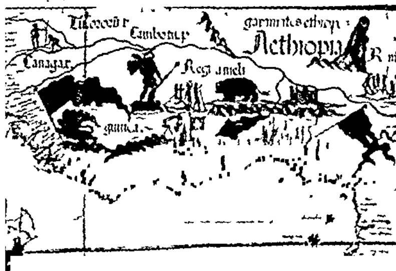


made the Negroes themselves an article of export, and thereby almost destroyed the legitimate trade with the natives, who learnt to regard the white man as their deadly enemy In the reigns of Edward VI and Mary the West African trade in its proper form was still being developed, besides voyages to the Canaries, to Archangel and ventures as far as Moscow but except the cod-fishing off Newfoundland nothing was done beyond the Atlantic by Englishmen before the reign of Elizabeth

Although the vent of cloth was still conducted mainly on the old lines and in the old European markets it was constantly on the increase, supplied by the ever growing cloth manufacture in the towns and still more in the villages of England After a stationary period in the fifteenth century, the cloth trade was again increasing by leaps and bounds Enclosure for pasture was a result Even before such enclosures were much complained of, foreigners had marvelled at the incredible number of sheep in England

The manufacture of wool into finished cloth involved a number of processes not all carried on by the same folk or in

179 As early as 1528 William Hawkins traded in friendly fashion with the Guinea Coast for ivory map of the Guinea Coast (1556)



the same place [58 59 180] The capitalist entrepreneur passed on the raw material the half manufactured and the finished cloth from place to place employing various classes of work men or buying from various classes of masters in the process William Forrest in Edward VI s reign grows prosaically lyrical over the ubiquitous cloth trade that employed so many kinds of skill

No town in England village or borough
But thus with clo h ng to be occupied
Though not in each place clothing clean thorough
But as the town is their part so applied
Here spinners here weavers there clothes to be dyed
With fullers and shearers as be thought best
As the Cloth er may have his cloth drest

In another stanza he urges the now popular policy of encourag ing the cloth trade at the expense of the declining export of raw wool

The wool the Staplers d gather and pack
Out of the Royalme to countries foreign
Be it revoked and stayed aback
That our cloth ers the same may retain
All kind of work folks here to ordain
Upon the same to exercise their feat
By tucking card ng spinning and to beat

Most of the weaving was done on the domestic system the loom owned and plied by the goodman of the house was set up in garret or kitchen But the fulling mills on the western streams must needs be more like factories and some weaving was already done on what may be called the factory system The clothier John Winchcombe was so rich and so princely that after his death in 1520 he became a legendary hero of ballad as Jack of Newbury a rival in fame to Dick Whitting ton himself Tradition said that he led a hundred of his prentices to Flodden Field and feasted King Harry at his house The Elizabethan ballad proceeds to describe his factory of cloth

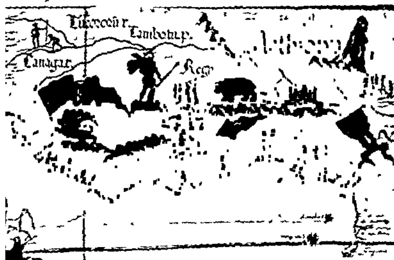
Within one room being large and long
There stood two hundred looms full strong

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179 *As early as 1528 William Hawkins traded in friendly fashion with the Guinea Coast for ivory map of the Guinea Coast (1556)*



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> Within one room being large and long
> There stood two hundred looms full strong

Possibly the cheerfulness, certainly the numbers, of the hands in the factory, are exaggerated by the retrospective ardour of [illegible]

The volume of internal trade was far greater than the external England still imported only luxuries for the rich Her people were fed, clothed, housed, and warmed by home products

[illegible] large extent ports on rivers

But the roads were used, then as now for all local distribution and for much traffic in bulk The badness of the roads, though execrable by our standards, was not absolute In dry weather they were used by wagons, and in all weathers by pack horse trains As far as possible the roads followed by commerce kept to chalk and other hard soils, of which much of England is composed Where they had to cross marshy or clay belts the traffic was helped by causeways some of these were built by the merchants who needed them in the absence of any effectual road authority Leland notes the causeway between Wendover and Aylesbury, else the way, in wet time, as in low stiff clay, were tedious to pass

Even for long distance traffic of heavy goods the supremacy of water over road was not complete Southampton, for example flourished as a port serving London Certain classes of goods were regularly unshipped at Southampton and sent by road to the capital to save the vessels from the necessity of rounding Kent

1 Elizabeth Power *Medieval People* p 158

Possibly the cheerfulness certainly the numbers of the hands in the factory are exaggerated by the retrospective ardour of [illegible] family

The volume of internal trade was far greater than the external England still imported only luxuries for the rich Her people were fed clothed housed and warmed by home products

The rivers were a great means of transport especially for the heaviest goods like the railways today Even inland towns like York Gloucester Norwich Oxford Cambridge were to a large extent ports on rivers

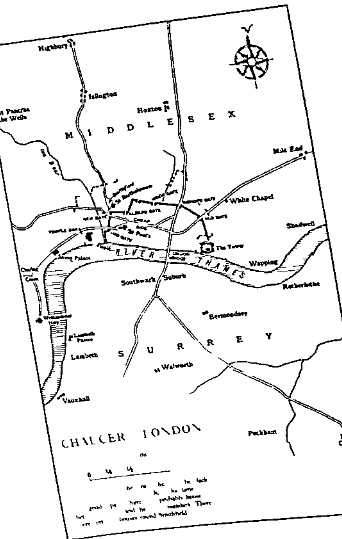
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Highbury
Islington
Hoxton
MIDDLESEX
Mile End
White Chapel
Shadwell
The Tower
Wapping
Southwark Suburb
Rotherhithe
Bermondsey
Lambeth
SURREY
Walworth
Vauxhall
Westminster
Charing Cross
St Paul's
RIVER THAMES
Peckham
CHAUCER LONDON

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES TO THE ILLUSTRATIONS

1

Gold noble of Edward III struck between 1360 and 1369 (Dept of Coins and Medals British Museum)

2

The Pageants of Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick (B M MS Cott Julius E iv art 6 f 20v Flemish late fifteenth century)

This MS consists of fifty three pencil drawings depicting various episodes in the life of the second Earl (1382 1439) It was probably executed about 1493 by a Flemish artist working for Anne Countess of Warwick youngest daughter of the Earl and widow of the kingmaker The drawings are of great delicacy and the page reproduced is a spirited illustration of men and horses in action

3

Open Field System Laxton Village Nottinghamshire (from an air photograph by Aerofilms Ltd)

Note the strips in the foreground running in different directions across the wide unfenced area (cf 125 showing a map with open fields)

4

Lands and green furrows at Crimscote near Whitchurch Warwickshire (from an air photograph by Aerofilms Ltd)

5

Queen Mary's Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 B vii f 78v English early fourteenth century)

This psalter owes its name to the fact that in 1553 it was prevented by Baldwin Smith a London Customs officer from

9 and 10

The Luttrell Psalter (B.M. MS., add. 42 130 ff. 170^{v} and 147^{v}, for general description of MS. see note under [7] above)

These contrasted scenes illustrate the English yeoman as farmer and archer

[9] shows a man sowing grain his dog chases one crow away while yet another crow is busy feeding at the sack of grain

[10] shows archery practice at a range The man standing in front appears to be instructing five others and a bull s eye has already been scored Note the bracers on the instructor s and the first archer s left arms

11

Chroniques de France et d Angleterre by Jehan Froissart vol. II (B.M. MS. Royal 18 E. I f. 165^{v} this MS. was probably one of those at Richmond Palace Flemish c. 1460)

The miniatures depict events which took place between 1377 and 1385 They are not of very good quality and suggest mass production This scene portrays the Peasants Revolt John Ball (labelled with his name) rides in front of a most orderly array of helmeted peasants bearing the banners of England and St George

12 and 13

Chroniques de France et d Angleterre by Jehan Froissart vol. II (B.M. MS. Royal 18 E. I ff. 172 and 175 for general description of MS. see note under [11] above)

[12] shows the rebels murdering the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Tower

[13] [illegible]

dea [illegible]

Ric [illegible]

14 and 15

The Luttrell Psalter (B.M. MS. add. 42 130 ff. 170 and 181 [illegible]

[15] shows a water mill built of brick and timber with a thatched roof In the foreground are the water wheel and a wooden dam while on the right can be seen two eel traps set in the stream

16

The Luttrell Psalter (B.M. MS. add. 42 130 f. 173^{v} for general description of MS. see note under [7] above)

being sent abroad and was presented by him to Queen Mary in October of the same year

Besides its numerous full-colour miniatures this MS is adorned with delicately tinted drawings which portray many scenes of contemporary life – all kinds of games, hunting and hawking, feasting and dancing The decorations of the Calendar are in full colour and illustrate the occupations of each month and scenes dramatizing the zodiacal signs The present illustration is that for August and shows peasants reaping corn under the direction of the reeve

The tinted drawings are remarkable for their delicate yet lively style, their free and graceful treatment of drapery their graphic delineation of animals in action and their close observation of the details of contemporary life

6

The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42, 130 f 158, English, East Anglian, *c* 1340)

This MS was commissioned by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Irnham, Lincolnshire (1276–1345), it is richly illuminated throughout with miniatures and marginal drawings, as well as with decorative initials and borders. The marginal subjects are of great variety covering many activities of contemporary life, they are drawn with vigour and are full of broad humour and realistic detail, forming a valuable commentary on the social life of the period The MS is also remarkable for the fantastic monsters and grotesques which posture in harsh colours alongside the morose peasants at their everyday work In this illustration the man is riding to mill (as Clement Paston did) on the bare horseback with his corn under him (cf text, p 40)

7

Queen Mary's Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 B vii, f 74, for general description of MS see note under [5] above)

This illustration is from the Calendar under March and shows two shepherds watching their flock

8

The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42, 130, f 163^{v}, for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

In this illustration the sheep are enclosed in a wattled pen, the woman in the foreground is milking a ewe, while two women carry away pitchers of milk on their heads In the background a man appears to be doctoring one of the sheep

9 and 10
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[ ]

14 and 15
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42 130 ff 170 and 181 for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

[14] shows a man ploughing with yoked oxen while his fellow walks alongside with a long whip

[15] shows a water mill built of brick and timber with a thatched roof In the foreground are the water wheel and a wooden dam while on the right can be seen two eel traps set in the stream

16
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42 130 f 173ᵛ for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

A cart piled high with sheaves is being driven uphill while various helpers push hard at the wheel or prevent the load slipping off

17 and 18
Queen Mary's Psalter (B M MS *Royal* 2 B VII, ff 161 and 160ᵛ, for general description of MS *see note* under [5] above)

These two illustrations show archery practice and a wrestling match In the latter scene one of the spectators holds up a pole with a cock presumably the prize for the victor

19
Alnwick Castle Northumberland (*from an air photograph by* Aerofilms Ltd)

Alnwick Castle was originally a Norman work of the early twelfth century Extensive additions including a barbican and flanking towers were made by the Percys at the beginning of the fourteenth century The castle was much restored in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Note how closely the lay-out in its essentials corresponds with that of the humble peel tower in [20]

20
Smailholm Tower Roxburghshire (from the engraving by J Grieg after the painting by H Weber, from *Border Antiquities of England and Scotland* by Sir Walter Scott, 1814)

Note the situation on a rocky outcrop The tower itself formed the home of the laird and was surrounded by a strong outer wall within which the peasants and their cattle could be housed when danger threatened (cf [19])

21
The fortified tower of Great Salkeld Church Cumberland (from a photograph in the Library of the National Buildings Record)

The village of Great Salkeld was frequently exposed to attack since the Kings of Scotland laid claim to its manor This fortified tower was built about the time of Richard II apparently as a place of refuge, it is four storeys high with an embattled parapet and a staircase turret Underneath it is a dungeon The walls are some six feet thick and perforated with smoke vents

22
Li romans du boin roi Alexandre by Lambert di Tours and Alexandre de Bernay (ff 1–208 of Bodleian MS 264, this illustra-

tion is on f 128 French the first half of the fourteenth century)

The illuminations are stated in a colophon to be the work of Jehan de Grise and to have been finished on 18 April 1344 In addition to the full colour miniatures of the deeds of Alexander there occur in the lower margins many varied scenes of contemporary life, depicting indoor games and outdoor pastimes windmills and forges friars preaching and boys playing at school They are vividly drawn often with close attention to detail but they lack the artistry of the secular scenes in the *Queen Mary s Psalter* (cf under [5] above) This illustration shows people warming themselves at a fireplace Note the fire-irons and the decoration on the chimney piece

23

Le Livre de Rusticon des prouffiz ruraulx compile par Maistre Pierre Croissens Bourgoiz de Boulogne (B M MS add 19 720 f 214 French late fifteenth century)

The illuminations to this French translation of Piero di Crescenzi s treatise on gardening agriculture and rural pursuits are hard in outline and show fondness for rather harsh blues reds and greens In this illustration the master of the house is discussing matters with a gardener one of the ladies is examining a bush while the others admire a flower with their attendant squire Note the small formal beds and the high brick wall shutting in the garden In both this illustration and those reproduced in [48] below the rather skimpy little plants assort oddly with the assured conventional representation of the buildings and the blue distant landscape

24

Haddon Hall Derbyshire (from an air photograph by Aerofilms Ltd)

In spite of its apparent unity of design Haddon Hall embodies some five centuries of building Parts of the chapel and the outer walls are twelfth and thirteenth century while the Great Hall (h separates the two courtyards) and the offices are fourteenth f the present fabric belongs to the of Haddon

25 and 26

The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42 130 ff 193 and ...), or general description of MS see note under [7] above)

A cart piled high with sheaves is being driven uphill, while various helpers push hard at the wheel or prevent the load slipping off

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22

Li romans du bon roi Alexandre by Lambert di Tours and Alexandre de Bernay (ff 1–208 of Bodleian MS 264, this illustra-

ently examining the contents of the steaming cauldrons The bottom scene shows Sir Geoffrey Luttrell at dinner his cup bearer kneeling in front of the table It has been suggested that the two Dominicans on the left of the picture are probably his chapla n and h s confessor Note the shape of the knives and the lack of forks

37–9
Queen Mary s Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 B. vii ff 151ᵛ 150ᵛ and 151 for general description of MS see note under [5] above)

Note that in the hawking scene the two women are riding astride the hawk has already fastened on one of the duck while the man on foot is ready to recall it with the lure

40
The Pageants of Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick (B M MS Cott Julius E iv art 6 f 16 for general description of MS see note under [2] above)

This scene shows a tournament in progress in the French lists the king and his nobles watching from the gallery

41
Hardwick Hunting Tapestry (from a painted photograph by G G Thomson in the Victoria and Albert Museum Dept of Textiles Flemish mid fifteenth century)

This tapestry is one of a series of four wool tapestries woven at Arras or Tournai belonging to the Duke of Devonshire which at one time hung in the Long Gallery at Hardwick Hall Derby shire They had been cut into pieces at some time unknown and were not restored and put together again until the beginning of this century

The subjects cover bear and otter hunting hawking deer hunting and boar hunting The complete tapestry from which our section is reproduced shows (in the centre foreground) the end of the hunt with a dead stag and the huntsmen apparently proceeding to the gralloch to the left are hounds in leash In the right foreground water fowl are being caught with hawks There is a general background of wood and hills topped by a castle, and nearer lies a water mill with the river pouring through the sluices Plenty of by play may be observed among the *company* Note the elaborate horn-shaped head-dresses of the women their netted hair and long hanging sleeves The scenes were probably inspired by Gaston de Foix s *Livre de Chasse* of c 1440–50

[25] The woman on the left is turning her spinning wheel by means of a handle, while the one on the right is carding wool with two hand-cards

[26] A woman, with her distaff tucked under her arm, is feeding her chickens Note that the hen is tethered to a peg

27 and 28
Queen Mary's Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 B VII, ff 81v and 75; for general description of MS see note under [5] above)

[27] From the Calendar under November Two men are knocking down acorns to feed their swine

[28] From the Calendar under April (sign of Taurus, the bull), showing women driving cattle

29
The Luttrell Psalter (B.M MS add 42, 130, f 172v, for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

Two women are reaping with sickles, while in the background a third appears to be suffering from backache The man on the left is binding the sheaves

30–32
Queen Mary's Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 B VII, ff 73, 112, and 155v, for general description of MS see note under [5] above)

[30] From the Calendar for February (sign of Pisces, fishes) *The men are hauling in a net, but seem to have caught very few* fish in it

[31] A man is catching partridges with a drop net

[32] One woman is setting a ferret into a burrow, while another is netting a rabbit coming out of a hole on the other side

33
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42, 130, f 63, for general description see note under [7] above)

A clerk is netting a small bird, note the string being pulled to close the mouth of the net

34–6
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42, 130, ff 206v, 207, and 208, for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

The first two illustrations show kitchen preparations for the meal depicted in the third illustration The top scene shows one man turning a spit on which are fowl and a sucking-pig, while his companion tends the fire itself The second one shows other kitchen servants engaged in pounding and chopping and appar-

This MS tells in French verse the events of 1399 and ends with the deposition of Richard and the accession of Henry IV The sixteen miniatures which illustrate it include representations of Richard s expedition to Ireland, his return to Conway Henry s landing and reception of the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey at Chester the capture of Richard the meeting of Richard and Henry at Flint and the final scene (illustrated here) where Henry claims the throne on Richard s abdication The scene is laid in the Parliament at Westminster the bishops on the left the nobles on the right Henry can be seen in the background beside the vacant throne he is wearing a high black cap

46
Troilus and Criseyde by Geoffrey Chaucer (Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS no 61 frontispiece English c 1400)

This full page miniature shows the poet reading his poem to an audience of courtiers in a garden Note the rich elaborate dress and the fantastic background of crags and castle Though English in execution the style betrays an ultimate Italian influence

47
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42 130 f 164ᵛ for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

This medieval walled city is labelled Constantinus Nobilis (Constantinople) but the artist has drawn an English city as he knew it with battlemented walls a church (its spire topped by a weathercock) an inn (with its sign of a bush on a pole) and gabled shops and houses with signs A group of people at the city gate are dancing to the music of pipe and tabor

48
Le Livre de Rusticon des prouffiz ruraulx etc (B M MS add 19 720 f 163 for general description of MS see note under [23] above)

This shows a walled herb garden in the town Gardeners are at work and the master appears to be discoursing to one of them on a plant which he has plucked

49 and 50
Oxford and Cambridge (from engravings from Loggan s *Oxonia Illustrata* 1675 and *Cantabrigia Illustrata* 1690 respectively from copies in the Cambridge University Library)

These are of particular interest in showing that enclosure and [illegible] he same time It so happens that the

42
Une povre et simple epistre dun viel solitaire des Celestins de Paris adressant a tres excellent prince Richart par la grace de dieu roy dangleterre, etc (B M MS Royal 20 B VI, f 2, French, 1395–6, probably the original copy presented to Richard II; one of the MSS formerly at Richmond Palace)

The author of this allegorical work was possibly Philippe de Maizieres, Chancellor of Cyprus, who joined the Celestine Order in 1380 and who had proposed a new crusading Order of the Passion This miniature shows him presenting his book to King Richard and carrying a banner of the Lamb (symbolizing his new Order) Note the courtiers long pointed shoes, their wide sleeves and parti-coloured hose

43
Thomas Occleve, *De Regimine principum* (B M MS Harley 4866, f 88, English early fifteenth century)

This portrait of Chaucer is the only one generally accepted as authentic Occleve had it painted from memory after Chaucer s death and had it placed opposite these lines in his poem

> Although his lyfe be queynt the résemblaunce
> Of him hath in me so fresh lyflynesse
> That to putte othir men in rémembraunce
> Of his persone I have heare his lyknesse
> Do makē to this ende in sothfastnesse
> That thei that have of him lest thought and mynde
> By this peynture may ageyn him fynde
> (ll 4,992–8)

(For a full discussion of this and the other so-called portraits of Chaucer, see M H Spielmann s *Portraits of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Chaucer Society, 1900)

44
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42 130 f 202ᵛ, for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

Sir Geoffrey Luttrell is here shown mounted on his horse and attended by his wife, Agnes Sutton, and his daughter-in-law, Beatrice Scrope, the former of whom is handing him his helmet, while the latter holds his shield The ladies gowns and the trappings of the horse repeat the Luttrell martlets of the shield

45
The Fall of Richard II, by Jehan Creton (B M MS Harley 1319, f. 57, French, early fifteenth century)

photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

Chipping Campden was a great medieval wool centre The present market house from whose arches this photograph was taken is Jacobean

56
Flemish Weavers Cottages Lavenham, Suffolk (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

Lavenham with its great Perpendicular church Guild Hall and Wool Hall (see [121] below) its plaster cottages and fine timber houses (see [163] below) retains today many evidences of its position as a medieval wool town The cottages in this illustration are some of the oldest in the town and were inhabited by Flemish weavers whose introduction (in the fourteenth century) into England contributed so largely to the growth of our cloth trade

57
The Merchant Adventurers Hall York (from a drawing by E R Tate September 1912 reproduced in *Country Life*)

This interior dates from about 1370 Note the fine original roof

58
Pictorial Illustrations to the Book of Genesis (B M MS Egerton 1894 f 2 English fourteenth century)

The outline drawings in this MS show great vigour and assurance especially perhaps in the variety of facial expressions Note the careful delineation of detail in this scene of a woman weaving at a loom

59
Des Proprietez des choses (French translation by Jean Corbechon of the *De Proprietatibus rerum* B M MS Royal 15 E iii f 269 the first part of this work is contained in Royal 15 E ii see [62] and [153] below Flemish late fifteenth century)

This MS was written at Bruges in 1482 by Jean du Ries possibly for Edward IV The miniatures which illustrate it are often in a coarse unattractive style but cover a wide variety of scenes and activities In this illustration the cloth is being dipped in the dye vat Note the faggots for keeping the fire going underneath the vat

enclosures can be seen on the hills behind Oxford while open field cultivation proceeds in the foreground of the Cambridge view Note in the latter that the land has been opened as pasture directly after the harvest has been gathered

51
Geoffrey of Monmouth *Historia Regum Britanniae* (B M MS Royal 13 A III f 14 English early fourteenth century drawings though the MS itself was written in the late thirteenth century)

These drawings have been added in the lower margins of the pages and represent a number of cities among them London Winchester and York In this sketch of London there seems to be some attempt to represent Westminster and the many spires of the city

52
The Pageants of Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick (B M MS Cott Julius E IV art 6 f 18v for general description of MS *see note under* [2] *above*)

This illustration shows a fight in the Channel between two ships one of which is ramming the other while the crews oppose each other with bows arrows and spears as if on land The man at the mast top of the further ship has been transfixed by an arrow in the very act of hurling a missile himself

53
Jean de Wavrin *Chronique d Angleterre* vol III (B M MS Royal 14 E IV f 169v Flemish late fifteenth century)

This chronicle is based on Froissart and this particular volume *deals with Richard II s reign up to 1387 It was executed for* Edward IV probably at Bruges *The scene depicted in this miniature illustrates the status of the Master of the Staple at* this time

54
William Grevel s House Chipping Campden Gloucestershire (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information, Crown copyright reserved)

Contrast this early fifteenth-century stone built Cotswold house of a great wool merchant with that [119] of the Essex cloth merchant Thomas Paycocke with its richly carved timber work

55
High Street *Chipping* Campden Gloucestershire (from a

49 (commonly called *The Smithfield Decretals* since it belonged at one time to the Priory of St Bartholomew Smithfield written in Italy but illuminated in England in the early fourteenth century)

This MS is full of rough vigorous drawings of scenes from English social life crafts and sports are illustrated side by side with story pictures and numerous grotesques

These two illustrations are of interest in showing a monk undergoing punishment in the stocks actually for robbing a church and the animal fable of the fox attired in a bishop's mitre and holding a staff preaching to a congregation of geese and hens There is a strong anti clerical flavour in the animal fable literature of the time

65
Queen Mary's Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 B vii f 131 for general description of MS see note under [5] above)

The showman is apparently leading his beast along the street when it turns upon a woman its master seems about to beat it to heel

66-9
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42 130 ff 32 53 78 and

shell in his hat and a wallet at his side

[6] Two of the grinders are occupied in turning the grindstone while a third sharpens the knife

[68] This beggar woman carries her child on her back and a rosary on her left arm

[69] This tinker carries his bellows slung on his shoulders He takes no notice of a vicious little dog which seems to be biting his ankle

70 and 1
Li romans du bon roi Alexandre (ff 1 208 of Bodleian MS 264 These illustrations are on ff 54 and 6 for general description of MS see note under [22] above)

In these two illustrations the artist depicts puppet shows in progress The audiences seem to be segregated according to sex although the shows would appear to be identical in type with much display of cudgels The curtained booths and the attitude of the players (especially in that watched by the group of women) recall the later Punch and Judy

60
John Lydgate, *Life of St Edmund* (B M MS Harley 2278 f 28v, English, c 1433)

This MS was presented to Henry VI in 1433 by Lydgate In the prologue (ff 6–10) which precedes the life, Lydgate tells of King Henry's visit to Bury St Edmunds at Christmas 1433 and a couple of miniatures illustrate this The miniatures throughout the MS are of course devoted to the events of St Edmund's life, and this one is intended to illustrate the Saint on his first landing in England superintending the building of his royal town at Hunstanton

61
Book of Hours of John, Duke of Bedford (the so-called *Bedford Missal*) (B M MS add 18 850, f 17v, French, early fifteenth century)

This sumptuous MS is lavishly illustrated with many miniatures, rich in gold and colour, as well as with elaborate borders of flowers, birds, and foliage to every page of text It was probably executed for the marriage in 1423 of John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford and Regent of France from 1422 to 1435, to Anne of Burgundy On Christmas Eve 1430, the Duchess gave it, with her husband's consent to the young King Henry VI at Rouen Portraits of the Duke and Duchess are introduced towards the end of the MS

The present illustration shows the building of the Tower of Babel The artist has introduced all the paraphernalia of the medieval builders craft The man to the left of the tower is mixing some kind of mortar those on the right are sending up blocks of stone by means of a wheel and pulley On the top of the tower itself is some rather unsafe looking scaffolding, from which one workman has already fallen In the foreground masons are at work measuring and fashioning the stone

62
Des Proprietez des choses (French translation by Jean Corbechon of the *De Proprietatibus rerum*, B M MS Royal 15 E II, f 265, the second part of this work is contained in Royal 15 E III, see [59] above, Flemish, late fifteenth century, for general description of MS see note under [59] above)

In this illustration the guild master is apparently judging the work of a mason and a carpenter

63 and 64
Decretals of Gregory IX (B M MS Royal 10 E II, ff 222v and

south clerestory wall with a demon stirring three souls in a cauldron The rest of the church is lavishly decorated with wall paintings of the Ascension the weighing of souls, and the familiar medieval motif of the Three Living and the Three Dead (I am indebted to Mr F Clive Rouse for these descriptive details as well as for the photograph itself)

76
Li romans du bon roi Alexandre (ff 1–208 of Bodleian MS 264, this illustration is on f 70, for general description of MS see note under [22] above)

This illustration shows a friar preaching from an open air pulpit

77 and 78
Pilgrimage of the Life of Man translated in 1426 by John Lydgate from G de Deguileville s *Pelerin de la vie humaine* (B M MS Cott Tiberius A vii ff 90 and 99 English early fifteenth century)

This allegorical poem of the pilgrim s life is illustrated by crudely executed scenes showing his adventures The two selected here are of interest as indicating the type of lodging that travellers and pilgrims to such shrines as Bury St Edmunds *might meet* with The first shows them satisfying their hunger, while in the second the beds are being prepared for the night The stick was apparently used to beat and smooth the bedding

79
Plan of Bury St Edmunds engraved by R Collins after a drawing by T Warren (1776) (from the copy in the Map Room of the British Museum)

no

wa

of the former abbey grounds in relation to the town. The great court of the abbey can be seen to the left of the abbey church and the gateway with dormitory and refectory between, while across the River Lark lies the vineyard of the abbey The Abbot s palace stood at the top of the great court flanked on the left side by the Abbot s brewhouse and stables

80
Exeter Cathedral the nave looking west (from a photograph in the library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

72
Decretals of Gregory IX (B M MS Royal 10 E IV, f 58 (*The Smithfield Decretals*), for general description of MS see note under [63] and [64] above)

A woman is juggling on two swords to the music of a pipe and tabor

73
The Luttrell Psalter (B M MS add 42 130, f 176, for general description of MS see note under [7] above)

These musicians are playing the nakers (i e kettledrums) to which the player appears to be dancing, a symphony, and the bagpipes

74
Book of Hours (B M MS add 29 433, f 89 French, with strong Italian influence early fifteenth century)

This miniature is a graphic representation of the medieval idea of hell The damned are being brought to hell s gate in carts and wheel-barrows by horned and sooty demons, unbaptized children arrive by the basketful slung on a demon s back or are flown direct clutched in the talons of winged monsters Beneath the ornate roof of hell Satan surrounded by his devils, torturing the newest arrivals himself swallows one victim whole, the while he seizes another

75
Doom Pickworth Church Lincolnshire (this illustration is from a measured water-colour drawing made by Mr E Clive Rouse from the painting over the chancel arch which he uncovered in 1947)

This newly discovered Doom or Last Judgement is of particular interest in that it is an example of a medieval wall painting preserved since the late fourteenth century without modern re-painting or restoration It is painted above the chancel arch of the fourteenth-century church and unfortunately suffered mutilation by the lowering of the roof in the late fifteenth century

In the centre can be seen the pierced feet of Christ resting upon the sphere On either side are the Virgin and St John and probably angels holding the cross and pillar with traces of Apostles or Evangelists beyond Below, the dead, rising from their graves, are being led away in two directions the blessed (on the left) being conducted to heaven by St Peter, carrying his keys, while the damned are dragged by a chain into hell s mouth by attendant demons The subject is continued on the

south clerestory wall with a demon stirring three souls in a cauldron The rest of the church is lavishly decorated with wall paintings of the Ascension, the weighing of souls and the familiar medieval motif of the Three Living and the Three Dead (I am indebted to Mr F Clive Rouse for these descriptive details as well as for the photograph itself)

76

Li romans du boin roi Alexandre (ff 1–208 of Bodleian MS 264, this illustration is on f 79 for general description of MS see note under [22] above)

This illustration shows a friar preaching from an open air pulpit

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79

Plan of Bury St Edmunds engraved by R Collins after a drawing by T Warren (1776) (from the copy in the Map Room [illegible]

of the former abbey grounds in relation to the town The great court of the abbey can be seen to the left of the abbey church and the gateway with dormitory and refectory between while across the River Lark lies the vineyard of the abbey The Abbot s palace stood at the top of the great court flanked on *the left side* by the Abbot s brewhouse and stables

80

Exeter Cathedral the nave looking west (from a photograph in the library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

The nave is of fourteenth century work and was completed under Bishop Grandisson (1327–69), note the elaboration of the ribbed vaulting

81

York Minster from the south (from an air photograph by Aerofilms Ltd)

The fabric was largely rebuilt in the fifteenth century initially under William Colchester (master mason of Westminster Abbey) Note the amount of space occupied by the windows by this date

82

Winchester Cathedral the nave looking west (from a photograph by Walter Scott Bradford in the possession of the library of the National Buildings Record)

The rebuilding of the nave was begun by William of Wykeham with William Wynford as his architect It is fine Perpendicular work of late fourteenth and fifteenth century date The west window (late fifteenth century) was apparently glazed as a great triptych but most of the glass was destroyed in the seventeenth century during the Civil War

83

William of Wykeham s chantry chapel south aisle of Winchester Cathedral (from a photograph by Walter Scott Bradford in the possession of the Library of the National Buildings Record)

This chapel was built by Wykeham himself who was Bishop of Winchester from 1367 to 1404 and was responsible for rebuilding the Norman nave of the Cathedral in Perpendicular style He also founded New College Oxford and Winchester College His tomb (shown here) has three figures at the foot representing three clerks

84

Winchester College engraving from Loggan s *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675) (from a copy in the Cambridge University Library)

William of Wykeham founded his college of St Mary s at Winchester in 1382 A grammar school (at which Wykeham was himself educated) already existed in Winchester but in founding his college Wykeham had in view the building up of a secular clergy From this college at Winchester were to be drawn the scholars of his New College at Oxford (see note for [85] below) The buildings of Winchester College the outer and middle gateways the inner quadrangle the chapel and the cloisters are substantially the same in Loggan s view as at their

first building except for the tower which had been rebuilt between 1473 and 1481

85
New College Oxford engraving from Loggan s *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675) (from a copy in the Cambridge University Library)
William of Wykeham founded New College in 1379 most of the building taking place between 1380 and 1400, his seventy scholars were to be drawn from his college at Winchester (see note for [84] above)
In Loggan s view the gateway and tower together with the chapel hall and cloisters are much as they were in their founder s day but a storey had been added to the front quadrangle in the seventeenth century We can thus see Wykeham s College as it was before the unhappy additions and restorations of the nineteenth century Note in the background the old city wall (thirteenth century) (see [132] below)

86
John Lydgate s *Troy Book* and *Story of Thebes* (B M MS Royal 18 D II f 148 illuminations partly English fifteenth century and partly Flemish sixteenth century)
This particular miniature is sixteenth-century Flemish work and is supposed to portray John Lydgate monk of Bury St Edmunds leaving Canterbury by a mery conseyte with the Canterbury Pilgrims the while he adds his version of the Siege of Thebes to the Canterbury Tales Note the girdling wall of the medieval city with its bastions

87
Tattershall Castle Lincolnshire (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)
This tower built of narrow bricks by Ralph Lord Cromwell (1394 1456) is all that remains of the great castle in which he lived as Lord Treasurer to Henry VI Its walls some sixteen feet thick contain noble fireplaces with rich heraldic mouldings (see [100] below)

88
Bible History in Flemish (B M MS add 38 122 f 78v Flemish mid fifteenth century)
This MS is illuminated with fine pen and ink drawings the one reproduced here illustrates a Flemish brickworks with work in progress

89
Queens College Cambridge (from a photograph by A F Kersting)

Founded under the patronage of Queen Margaret of Anjou in 1448 and after intermission during the Wars of the Roses continued about 1465 under the patronage of Edward IV s queen Elizabeth Wydville and thereafter known as Queens College since it commemorates two queens The principal court (shown here) was almost complete when the Civil Wars broke out The gateway of red brick has octagonal turrets (The dial on the old chapel wall on the left is eighteenth century)

90
Jean de Wavrin s *Chronique d Angleterre* vol iii (B M MS Royal 14 E IV f 195 for general description of MS see note under [53] above)

This fifteenth century illustration shows an English expedition arriving at Lisbon in 1385 and being received by John King of Portugal The occasion (as described by Froissart) was that of the departure of the King of Castile from the siege of Lisbon and the arrival of three English men-of war with 500 archers They were made up mostly of adventurers from Calais Cherbourg and Brest who hearing of the war had assembled in Bordeaux and set out under three English captains eager to join in the fight Their coming was hailed with joy in Lisbon and the King of Portugal sent for them thinking that John of Gaunt might have sent them to help him since Gaunt (believing himself to be the rightful King of Castile) was eager in protestations of friendship to John of Portugal who might be expected to help him against Spain Sir quoth Northbery [one of the English captains] *it is a long season sith he [John of Gaunt] had any* knowledge of us or we of him Sir we be men of divers sorts *seeking* for adventures here be some *are come to serve* you from the town of Calais John of Portugal accepted them gladly dined them in his palace had lodgings found for them and ordered their wages to be paid them for three months The adventurers gave him good counsel afterwards and helped him to win the Battle of Aljubarrota

91
The Court of the King s Bench (from *Archaeologia* XXXIX 1863 p 357 English, early fifteenth century)

This miniature is one of four vellum leaves surviving from a law treatise of Henry VI s reign The other three leaves repre

sent the Courts of Chancery Common Pleas and Exchequer The present illustration shows at the top the five judges of the Court below them are the king s coroner and attorney etc On the left are the jury and in front in the dock is a prisoner in fetters with serjeants of the law on either side of him In the foreground more wretched prisoners chained together wait their turn watched over by gaolers On the centre table stand the ushers one of whom seems to be swearing in the jury

92
Roman de la Rose (B M MS Harley 4425 f 12ᵛ Flem sh late fifteenth century)

This elaborately illuminated MS of the well known allegory illustrates the medieval idea of chivalry and all that it entailed Here (in the miniature shown) is the walled formal garden with its gushing fountain flowering shrubs and trees full of fruit On the lawn beside the fountain sit the ladies with their attendant knights making music

93
Parade Shield (Dept of British and Medieval Antiquities British Museum Flemish late fifteenth century)

This exquisite shield of parade would be d splayed at tourna ments and was not of course for protection in combat The whole spirit of medieval chivalry is incarnate in the decoration the pale del cate elegance of the lady in her rich brocaded gown the steadfast armoured knight kneeling before her with Death at his shoulder and h s vow on the scroll above him VOUS OU LA MORT all express the mystic rapture of the love poetry of the Middle Ages

94
The Ballad of the Nut Brown Maid as printed in R Arnold s *Customs of London* (Antwerp 1503) (from a copy in the British Museum)

95
Bo[illegible] *mulieribus* (French version B M MS
Re[illegible] [illegible]ury)

[illegible] a loom with her women sp nn g [illegible] [illegible]ell the kind of activity that went on in palace and manor a[illegible] [illegible]ough the Middle Ages Thread was spun materials woven and embroidered while tapestry reproduced the stories that were told to the accompaniment of busy fingers

paintings Only two of the scenes are purely religious, the remainder being moral and secular, embracing what appear to be moral or allegorical subjects, such as are associated with the medieval teaching of youth The present illustration shows the north wall and gives some idea of the comprehensive scheme of decoration including even the window recesses – the window itself has been altered The Seven Ages of Man are depicted above a Nativity while on either side of the window recess are figures of the Apostles with scrolls bearing sentences from the Creed which are continued round the room above a border of birds grouped in pairs

For a full preliminary description of the discovery and the decoration itself reference should be made to Mr F Clive Rouse s article in *Country Life* (4 April 1947)

99

The Great Hall Penshurst Place Kent (from a drawing by Edward Blore 1787 1879 architect and artist and son of the topographer Thomas Bl re B M MS add 42 017 f 70)

The Great Hall of Penshurst built by Sir John de Pulteney in the fourteenth century is a substantially untouched feudal hall with open hearth in the centre screens and minstrels gallery and a raised dais for the high table

100

Fireplace at Tattershall Castle Lincolnshire (from a photo graph by *Country Life* see general note under [87] above)

Th s is a fireplace on the ground floor of the brick tower in [87] and illustrates Ralph Lord Cromwell s love of richly

with Treasurer s purse

101 and 102

King Henry VI s Psalter (B M MS Cott Domitian A xvii f 120)

other on

ix of the

acy the

ated here

the faces

103

The Warwick or Rous Roll (MS in the possession of the College of Arms English 1477 85)

important part in the training of the young nobleman and went on side by side with his tuition in book-learning

108 'Students'
Woodcut from *Compotus manualis ad usum Oxoniensium*, printed by Charles Kyrfoth 5 February 1519 (from *English Woodcuts 1480-1535*) by Edward Hodnett, Bibliographical Society, 1935)

This illustration also shows a schoolmaster with his pupils but they are older than those shown in [106] – At school above, though the birch is still in evidence Note the books and globes, the lamp and hour glass the master's desk with its book cupboard and the knife and penner (or pencase) on the left-hand side as well as the book stands on either side

109 A scholar
Woodcut from *Stans puer ad mensam* by Joannes Sulpitius, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1518 (from a copy in the British Museum)

This cut shows a scholar in his study note his reading-desk and bookshelf and his pencase

110
Grammar Hall Magdalen College Oxford (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

In 1480 William of Waynflete founded a grammar school for his College of St Mary Magdalen at Oxford It was set up within the precincts of the College and had a grammar master and usher appointed Its purpose was to provide a preliminary grounding for university courses and one of its first teachers was John Stanbridge the author of the *Parvulorum Institutio* (a woodcut from which in Wynkyn de Worde's edition is reproduced on page 155 The building in the centre of this photograph is all that remains of the grammar school and the old Magdalen Hall

111
Magdalen College Oxford (from a ph[illegible]
the Central Office of In[illegible]

The roofed cloister [illegible]
built about 1480 (for a[illegible] William of Waynflete, see under [105] above)

112
Duke Humphrey's Library in the Bodleian Oxford (from a photograph by A F Kersting)

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, gave to the University of Oxford many of the books he had seized from the Louvre and elsewhere during his French campaigns In 1444 the University asked his permission to use his name as founder of the building they intended to erect to house his gifts This building now forms part of the Bodleian and is still known as Duke Humphrey s Library, although almost all of Duke Humphrey's books have long since been dispersed

113

King s College Chapel, Cambridge (from a photograph by A F Kersting)

Founded in 1440 by King Henry VI (possibly in emulation of William of Wykeham s foundations at Winchester and Oxford) King s College possesses a Perpendicular chapel, which is far loftier and more spacious than the usual college chapel The work came to a standstill with Edward IV s accession in 1462 but was resumed by Richard III in 1483, though two years later it was again abandoned until Henry VII became its patron in 1508 The fabric was completed by 1515 under Henry VIII and the work of glazing the great windows then began

While the actual building was spread over some seventy years, the whole design appears to have been chiefly the work of Reginald of Ely who had been appointed by Henry VI in 1443 to secure workmen for building the chapel and remained in charge of the work until the King s deposition The chapel was completed under John Wastell (who had already been working at Canterbury) as master mason and designer of the vaulting

114

From Sanderus s *Flandria Illustrata* (1641) (reproduced from William Blades s *William Caxton* (1882) plate 11)

This shows the House of the Merchant Adventurers in Bruges where Caxton lived as Governor of the English nation as the Merchant Adventurers were known in the Low Countries From being a merchant of the Mercers Company Caxton seems to have become Governor of the English merchants at Bruges between June 1462 and June 1463

In this house each merchant lived under rules as strict as a monastery s, since the foreign merchant in the Low Countries had to endure many restrictions in his manner of trading and in his way of life

115
The oldest known representation of a printing-press, from the title page of Hegesippus's *Historia de Bello Judaico*, printed by Judocus Badius Ascensius in Paris (1507) (reproduced from William Blades's *William Caxton* (1882), plate x11)

116
A German printing press from Jobst Amman's *Stände und Handwerker* (1568) (reproduced from William Blades's *William Caxton* (1882) plate 12)

117
Poems of Charles Duke of Orleans (B M MS Royal 16 E. 11 f 73, executed in England in Flemish style c 1500)

Charles, Duke of Orleans father of Louis XII of France was captured at Agincourt and imprisoned in England from 1415 to 1440 (cf text p 67, for the life of French prisoners in England) This splendid miniature shows the Pool crowded with ships, old London Bridge in the background with its medieval houses, and in the foreground the Tower of London The medieval practice of showing several episodes in a man's life side by side in one miniature is followed here the Duke can be seen seated within the Tower writing at a window and in the courtyard handing a letter to a messenger

118
Brass of Thomas Pownder and his wife in the Church of St Mary Quay Ipswich Suffolk (from a rubbing in the British Museum add MS 32 480 EE 5 Flemish 1525)

This brass engraved in Renaissance style is a good example of Flemish work It shows Thomas Pownder, merchant bailey of Ipswich his wife and family The shield in the centre bears upon it his merchant marks with his initial T in the middle of it The shields on either side bear the arms of Ipswich and of the Merchant Adventurers

119
Thomas Paycocke's House Great Coggeshall, Essex (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information, Crown copyright reserved)

The village of Great Coggeshall lay in the centre of the great cloth making district of Essex and here the clothier Thomas Paycocke built (about 1500) the house shown in this illustration Its timber is rich in carving note the leaf and flower decoration of the bressumer supporting the upper storey, the linen fold

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... which owed its name to its having ... 1415) and then to ... great importance for ... res and its costume

This miniature (the frontispiece) shows the miming of a classical comedy by masked actors the book being apparently recited from a draped box, before a crowded audience, the whole being enclosed in a circle labelled Theatrum joculatoris Below, the author is seen presenting his book to his patron

125
Map of the Manor of Feckenham Worcestershire (reproduced by courtesy of the owner, Dr Edward Lynam)

This map was drawn by John Doharty the Younger (1677–1735) in 1744 from an earlier map surveyed and drawn by John Blagrave in 1591 It shows a typical Tudor manor, the chief buildings court house, church, mill, etc., can be easily identified, but the map is of special interest in showing the common lands and the gradual encroachment on these and on the lord's wastes by different land-holders who are named in the key (for fuller details see Dr Lynam's The Character of England in Maps *Geographical Magazine*, June 1945)

126
Cardinal Wolsey (1475?–1530) (from the portrait by an unknown artist in the National Portrait Gallery)

127
William Tyndale (d 1536) (from the portrait by an unknown artist in the National Portrait Gallery)

128
Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) (from the portrait after Hans Holbein in the National Portrait Gallery)

129
Title page of the Fourth Great Bible (printed in London by Edward Whitchurch in November 1540, but not published until 1541 from a copy in the British Museum)

A royal proclamation was made on 6 May 1541, ordering that in al & syngular paryshe churches, there shuld be prouyded by a certen day now expired, at the costes of the curaytes & paryshioners Bybles Conteynge the olde & newe Testament, in the Englyshe tounge to be fyxed & set up openlye in euery of the said paryshe Churches .. By the which Iniunctions the

panelling of the door on the left, and the figure on the right side of it

120

Little Sodbury Manor, Gloucestershire (from a photograph in the Library of the National Buildings Record)

This stone manor house was originally held by the family of Stanshaws in the fifteenth century. The porch and the part to the left of it are fifteenth century, while that to the right (with corbelled bay window) is early sixteenth. The manor has a fine fifteenth-century hall with an open timber roof.

121

Wool Hall, Lavenham, Suffolk (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information. Crown copyright reserved; cf. note on Lavenham under [56] above)

This was probably the Hall of the Guild of St Mary the Virgin and dates from about 1480.

122

The Passion Play of Valenciennes (*Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS franç. 12 536; French, 1547*)

This water-colour drawing well illustrates one kind of medieval stage, in which the various scenes against which the action took place are ranged in order across the stage from Heaven to Hell-mouth. The various 'mansions' are labelled Nazareth, Jerusalem, The Palace, etc.

123

Book of Hours executed for Étienne Chevalier by Jehan Fouquet (Musée Condé, Chantilly; French, fifteenth century)

This miniature (Miniature no. 44 according to Henri Martin's classification) shows a typical mystery play of the fifteenth century being acted on a wattled stage (the mansions of heaven and hell appearing to left and right). The play is that of the Martyrdom of St Apollonia, an aged deaconess of Alexandria, alleged to have suffered martyrdom in A.D. 248-9. Her teeth were pulled out with pincers and on being threatened with death by burning she cast herself on the pyre 'by supernatural impulse' according to St Augustine. Her aid as patron saint was invoked against the toothache!

124

The Plays of Terence (Paris, Bibliothèque d'Arsenal, cod. lat. 664, f. 1v – the so-called *Térence des ducs*, French, early fifteenth century)

(*from the copy* in the Map Room of the British Museum) (cf [133] above)

135
Castle Acre Priory Norfolk (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information, Crown copyright reserved)
[illegible] dered to Henry VIII in 1537 and was

On the right lies the Prior s lodging built by Prior Winchelsea at the beginning of the sixteenth century

136
Fountains Abbey Yorkshire (from an air photograph by Aerofilms Ltd)

This great Cistercian house was founded in 1132 and its ruins still exhibit the typical Cistercian arrangement of the church, cloisters and conventual buildings The Perpendicular tower was not built until the early sixteenth century and thus only shortly before the Dissolution (cf note under [166] below)

137
Trinity College Cambridge (from an engraving by Loggan in his *Cantabrigia Illustrata* 1690 from a copy in the Cambridge [illegible]

ing to Gonville Hall) together with some minor hostels The Great Court (as shown by Loggan) owed its form to Neville (appointed Master in 1573) the chapel was finished about 1564 the Library (in the far distance) by Wren was just being completed at the time of Loggan s engraving

138
Christ Church Oxford (from an engraving by Loggan in his *Oxonia Illustrata* 1675 from a copy in the Cambridge University Library)

Founded by Cardinal Wolsey [illegible]

kynges royall maiestye intended that his louynge subjectes shulde haue & use the commodities of the readyng of the said Bibles humbly, mekely, reverently & obediently.

After 1541 Bible printing ceased for the rest of Henry's reign, since Bishop Gardiner condemned the translation which the Church had been so lately ordered to procure A new translation (closer to the Vulgate) was decided on but not proceeded with

130
Edward VI s coronation procession (commonly known as The Riding from the Tower) (from a water-colour copy made for the Society of Antiquaries by S H Grimm in 1785 from the picture c 1547, at Cowdray destroyed by fire in 1793)

The procession is shown passing down Cheapside on its way to Westminster In the centre can be seen Cheapside Cross, on the extreme left is the Tower and on the right old St Paul s Note the tall gabled houses and the rich hangings which decorate the balconies in honour of the procession

131
Joris Hofnagel s Tudor Wedding (1590) (from a water-colour copy made by S H Grimm 1788 for the Society of Antiquaries from the original painting at Hatfield House)

This probably represents a wedding feast by the old Church of St Mary Magdalen at Bermondsey though the scene has been variously described as a Tudor masque and Horsleydown Fair The vigour and incident of the scene with its feasting and dancing is a lively portrayal of Tudor England at the end of the sixteenth century

132
The old city wall (thirteenth century) in the gardens of New College, Oxford (cf [85] above) (from a photograph by A F Kersting)

133
The ruins of Bury St Edmunds Abbey Suffolk as engraved by R Godfrey in 1779 (from the copy in the Map Room of the British Museum)

The Abbey was dissolved in 1540 and this print is of interest as showing the extent to which the buildings had been despoiled some 230 years later (cf also [134] below)

134
Bury St Edmunds Abbey, as engraved by S Kendall (1787)

This cloister was completed by Walter Froucester, who was Abbot from 1382 until his death in 1412

145
The refectory, Chester Cathedral (from a photograph in *Cathedrals* 1926 by courtesy of British Railways)
Built by Abbot Simon de Whitchurch 1265-90

146
The Chapter House Wells Cathedral (from a photograph by A F Kersting)
Begun probably under William de Marchia Bishop (1293-1302) who built the walls it was finished about 1319 under John de Godelee Dean (1306-33) when the vaulting and windows were built The vaulting ribs branch out from the cluster of shafts which form the central pillar of this octagonal chapter house The carved and canopied stalls are ranged round the room as a wall arcade above the stone bench which forms the seats of the stalls

147
The Abbot s Tribunal Glastonbury (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)
Built by Abbot Beere c 1493

148
The Guild Hall King s Lynn (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)
Built about 1423 this guild hall has a chequered front and entrance porch of flint and freestone It was the Hall of the Trinity Guild The arms above the porch are of Edward VI and Elizabeth

149
Edward VI granting the Charter to Bridewell (from an engraving by George Vertue published 16 February 1750 after a contemporary picture at Bridewell Hospital from Vertue s *Nine Historical Prints*, republished by the Society of Antiquaries 1776)
The King is shown giving the Charter to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London Those surrounding the King are identified by Vertue Among them the Master of the Rolls and the Earl of Pembroke with in the corner the face of Hans Holbein the painter The granting of the Charter took place however, in 1553 ten years after Holbein s death

139
Much Wenlock Abbey, Shropshire (from a drawing by Edward Blore, for whom see note under [99] above, B M MS add 42,018, f 31)

This Cluniac priory was surrendered in 1539 when the Prior s lodging (which had only been built at the end of the fifteenth century) together with the Infirmary building (of Norman date) were taken over by the Lawley family and used as a dwelling house although the Priory church and St Milburga s shrine were destroyed

140
Titchfield Abbey, Hampshire (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

Passed at the Dissolution to Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, who cut through the middle of the nave to erect the great gate of his mansion

141
The Chained Library Hereford Cathedral (from a photograph in *Cathedrals*, 1926, by courtesy of British Railways)

This medieval library still contains over 2 000 chained volumes Note the rail to which the chains are fastened and the placing of the books with fore edges facing outwards

142
The Abbot s Kitchen Glastonbury (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

Built entirely of stone in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, this kitchen has a vaulted roof and four enormous fire-places In the lantern hung the bell to call the poor to the almonry which adjoined the kitchen on the north side

143
St Augustine s Abbey Canterbury (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

The Great Gate was built by Abbot Fyndon between 1300 and 1305 The upper part formed a lodging for distinguished guests

144
The carrels in the south cloisters Gloucester Cathedral (from a photograph by Mrs J P Sumner in the Library of the National Buildings Record)

This great Tudor statesman held the lucrative office of *custos brevium* in the Court of Common Pleas from 1547 to 1561, after a period in the Tower consequent upon his having been secretary to the Lord Protector Somerset (who was disgraced in 1549), he became Secretary of State in 1550, was created Baron Burghley in 1571, becoming Lord High Treasurer from 1572 to 1598 and Elizabeth s chief Minister (for his building of Burghley House, see note under [158] below)

156
Edward Seymour first Duke of Somerset (1506 ?–52) (from the portrait by an unknown artist in the National Portrait Gallery)

Brother of Henry VIII s third wife, Jane Seymour, Edward Seymour was closely associated with the King s household and was made Lieutenant of the Kingdom during Henry s absence in France in 1544 The next year he was active and successful in the war with France becoming Lieutenant-General in 1546 On Henry s death he was appointed Lord Protector to the young Edward VI and Duke of Somerset the same year His fall in 1549 was brought about by the measures he advocated which stirred up much opposition against him and brought him to the Tower After a brief period of pardon and readmission to the King s favour he was arrested again in 1551 and beheaded on Tower Hill in 1552

157
From a portrait of two unknown sitters (formerly thought to be William Cecil Baron Burghley and his second wife Mildred) by an unknown artist (1596) (in the possession of the Hon Michael Astor M P)

(*Cf text* pp 261 2 for comments on Elizabethan portraiture Note the stiff attitudes the white faces the attention to the rich detail of the dress)

158
Burghley House Northamptonshire (from a drawing by Edward Blore for whom see note under [93] above B M MS add 42 019 f 82)

Cecil (for whom see note under [155] above) began to build Burghley House in 1556 on the site of the old manor house Subsequent portions were added between 1577 and 1587 from designs by John Thorpe (who also designed Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire about the same time) This great Tudor house provides an *example* of one paid for by money made in the Courts of Law (cf text pp 243 4)

150
Sir Nicholas Bacon (1509–79) (from the portrait by an unknown artist in the National Portrait Gallery)

Bacon was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal (1558) and High Steward of St Albans, the friend of Matthew Parker and benefactor of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

151
Gorhambury, St Albans (from an eighteenth-century watercolour drawing, by courtesy of *Country Life*)

The house shown here was built by Sir Nicholas Bacon between 1563 and 1568, partly with stone from the abbey of St Albans The abbey, after its surrender in 1539, wa granted in 1541 by Henry VIII to Ralph Rowlett, Merchant of the Staple at Calais (d 1543) It passed thence to his brother who sold it in 1561 to Sir Nicholas Bacon

152
The Grammar School, Stratford on Avon (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information, Crown copyright reserved)

Built about 1473 as the Guild House, its over hall or dorter was converted into a schoolroom by Shakespeare s father, and became the grammar school The hall beneath housed the Court of Records and was also the scene of plays performed before the Bailiff for his approval by companies coming to the town, before they gave public performances in the inn yards It was probably also the scene at other times of the Latin plays acted by the boys of the grammar school

153
Des Proprietez des choses (B M MS Royal 15 E II, f 165, the second part of this work is contained in Royal 15 E III, for general description of this MS see note under [59] above, Flemish, late fifteenth century)

This illustration shows patients arriving for treatment by a physician and waiting their turn to be seen The first man is being bled

154
The Dance of Death, by Hans Holbein the Younger (Cologne, 1573) (from the copy in the Cambridge University Library)

155
William Cecil, Baron Burghley (1520–94) (from the portrait attributed to Marc Gheerhaerdts in the National Portrait Gallery)

This woodcut illustrates the simple arrangements for cooking and eating which one would expect to find in a poor inn or small yeoman s house in early Tudor times Note the scanty array of pots and pans, the rough bench settle and trestle table

165
Compton Wynyates Warwickshire (from a photograph in the Library of the Central Office of Information Crown copyright reserved)

This early Tudor house was much restored by Sir William Compton in Henry VIII s reign partly (according to Leland) with material from the ruined Fulbrooke Castle near Warwick

166
Fountains Hall Yorkshire (from a drawing by Edward Blore for whom see note under [99] above, B M MS add 42 019 f 95)

At the Dissolution Sir Richard Gresham bought Fountains Abbey from the king It was sold in 1596 to Sir Stephen Proctor who in 1611 used material (including stained glass) from the ruined abbey to build this mansion

167
West Stow Hall Suffolk (interior) (from a photograph by *Country Life* cf note on West Stow Hall under [170] below)

The interior of the gatehouse has a Tudor wall *painting* of four of the seven ages of man with an elaborate frieze above and traces of ornamentation on either side From left to right the scene depicts

A boy with a hawk who is saying Thus do I all the day
A pair of lovers Thus do I while I may
An older man (looking on) Thus did I when I myght
A very old man Good lord will this world last ever?

168
The Abbot s Parlour Thame Park Oxfordshire (from a photograph in *Country Life*)

The Tudor block of Thame Park was built by Abbot King between 1530 and the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539 His parlour has fine linen fold panelling with a frieze above of richly carved wood suggestive of Italian workmanship Note also the elaborate carving of the ceiling beams in similar style The fireplace is contemporary

169
East Barsham Norfolk (from a drawing by Edward Blore, for

159
Dover Harbour at the time of Henry VIII (B M MS Cott Augustus I, 1, 22 and 23)

This roll shows the fortifications of the harbour with the gun emplacements at the ends of the mole The town can be seen in the background, with the castle above Note the ships, their high poops, their spread of sail, and their guns This roll bears precise descriptive notes upon the condition of the harbour and its main features

160
The Anne Gallant, from *The Second Roll declaring the Number of the Kings Majesty's own Galliases*, by Anthony Anthony (1546) (B M MS add 22,047, the first roll is in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge)

This coloured drawing sh[illegible]
complement was 250 m[illegible]
and mariners and 30 as g[illegible]
brass and 38 *guns of iro*[illegible] gives details of the gun-*powder and shot (of iron, stone, and lead), the weapons, etc*

161
St Mawes Castle, Cornwall (*from* an air photograph by Aerofilms Ltd)

This castle formed part of Henry VIII s scheme of coastal defence It was designed with Pendennis Castle about 1540 to defend Falmouth Harbour It is actually a small massive blockhouse, consisting of a central tower with bastions pierced for guns, similar examples are Deal and Walmer Castles, and Camber Castle, near Rye

162
Tudor cottages at Chiddingstone, Kent (from a photograph in the library of the Central Office of Information, Crown copyright reserved)

163
Tudor House, Lady Street, Lavenham, Suffolk (from a pho[illegible] graph in the library of the Ce[illegible]
[illegible]

164
Gringoire's *Castel of Laboure*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1506 (from the copy in the Cambridge University Library)

in the ornamentation of the bed and the chair in which the king is seated as well as in the vista through the archway perhaps also in the fact that he is engaged in studying richly bound MSS

174 7 TUDOR PORTRAITS

174
The Darnley Brothers (from the portrait by Hans Eworth c 1520–after 1578 at Windsor Castle)

175
Henry VIII (from the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery after Hans Holbein s painting at Althorp)

176
The Princess Elizabeth (from the portrait by an unknown painter working in England c 1546 at Windsor Castle)

177
Thomas Howard third Duke of Norfolk (1473 1554) (from the portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger at Windsor Castle)

The above four portraits have been selected to illustrate different styles of portraiture which flourished in Tudor England Those of Henry VIII and the Duke of Norfolk are in typical Holbein style shrewd in characterization paying full attention to the importance of robes of state and insignia of office that of the Princess Elizabeth (the only certain contemporary portrait of her as Princess) exhibits a calm assurance and warmth of treatment which make it unique while that of the young Darnley brothers (the taller of whom became husband of Mary Queen of Scots) with its background of panelled gallery is a variation of the stiff white faced family portrait

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178
Li Livres du graunt Caam by Marco Polo (Bodleian MS 264 ff 218 ·1 this miniature is on f 218 English c 1400)

This scene depicts Marco Polo s embarkation at Venice in the background is a view of Venice itself while in the foreground are scenes from his voyages The ships are the type of trading vessel which brought Venetian goods to England during the fifteenth century in return for wool

179
Chart of the Southern Ocean from a Portolano by Diego Homem (B M MS add 5415 A ff 13ᵛ 14 Portuguese 1558)

whom see note under [99] above, B M MS add 42,019 f 59)

This manor is a fine example of ornamental brickwork and was built by the Fermors in the reigns of Henry VII and VIII The detached gatehouse bears the royal arms in moulded brick above the entrance Note the terracotta ornament and the elaborate turrets

Henry VIII visited here in 1511 and is reported to have walked barefoot from the house to the Shrine of Walsingham some two and a half miles distant

170
West Stow Hall Suffolk *(from a photograph by Country Life)*

Another type of brick gateway is illustrated here The Hall was rebuilt by Sir John Crofts between 1520 and 1533 It is plainer in style than the East Barsham gateway (see note under [169] above) although it also has turrets topped in this case with ornamental figures

171
Henry VIII jousting before Katherine of Aragon (from the Westminster Tournament Roll in the possession of the College of Arms)

On 12 and 13 February 1509 10 (0 s) Henry VIII held the jousts at Westminster to celebrate the birth of his son Henry (who however, only lived from 1 January to 22 February) The roll is richly though *crudely illuminated and records* the proces sion *the tournament itself and the return to court This illus tration shows Henry himself riding in the lists before the Queen* and her ladies

172
Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 A XVI f 63 for general description *of MS see note under* [173] below)

This illustration shows Henry VIII playing on his harp His jester William Sommers, *stands on the right* It was the fashion at the Court from the King downwards to compose musical tunes and verses to go with them (see text p 262)

173
Psalter (B M MS Royal 2 A XVI f 3 English sixteenth century)

This psalter, written in Italian style *for Henry VIII* by John Mallard (*regius orator*) has many *marginal notes* in Latin by Henry himself This illustration shows *Henry seated reading* in his bedroom The influence of the *Renaissance can be seen*

in the ornamentation of the bed and the chair in which the King is seated as well as in the vista through the archway, perhaps also in the fact that he is engaged in studying richly bound MSS

174–7 TUDOR PORTRAITS

174
The Darnley Brothers (from the portrait by Hans Eworth, c 1520–after 1578 at Windsor Castle)

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Chart of the Southern Ocean from a Portolano, by Diego Homem (B M MS add 5415 A ff 13ᵛ 14 Portuguese, 1558)

This map, executed for Philip II, illustrates in pictorial scenes the natives and animals of the Guinea Coast in 1558, that is, a little later than the period at which William Hawkins had traded in friendly fashion with its natives for ivory

180

The Fuller's Panel bench-end at Spaxton Church, Somerset (from a drawing by Alfred Clarke, 1859, in the *Somersetshire Archaeological Society's Proceedings*, vol viii, pt i, for the year 1858)

This bench-end exhibits some of the implements in use by sixteenth-century Somersetshire cloth-weaver He appears to b

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This bench-end exhibits some of the implements in use by a sixteenth-century Somersetshire cloth-weaver He appears to be pressing a piece of cloth

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